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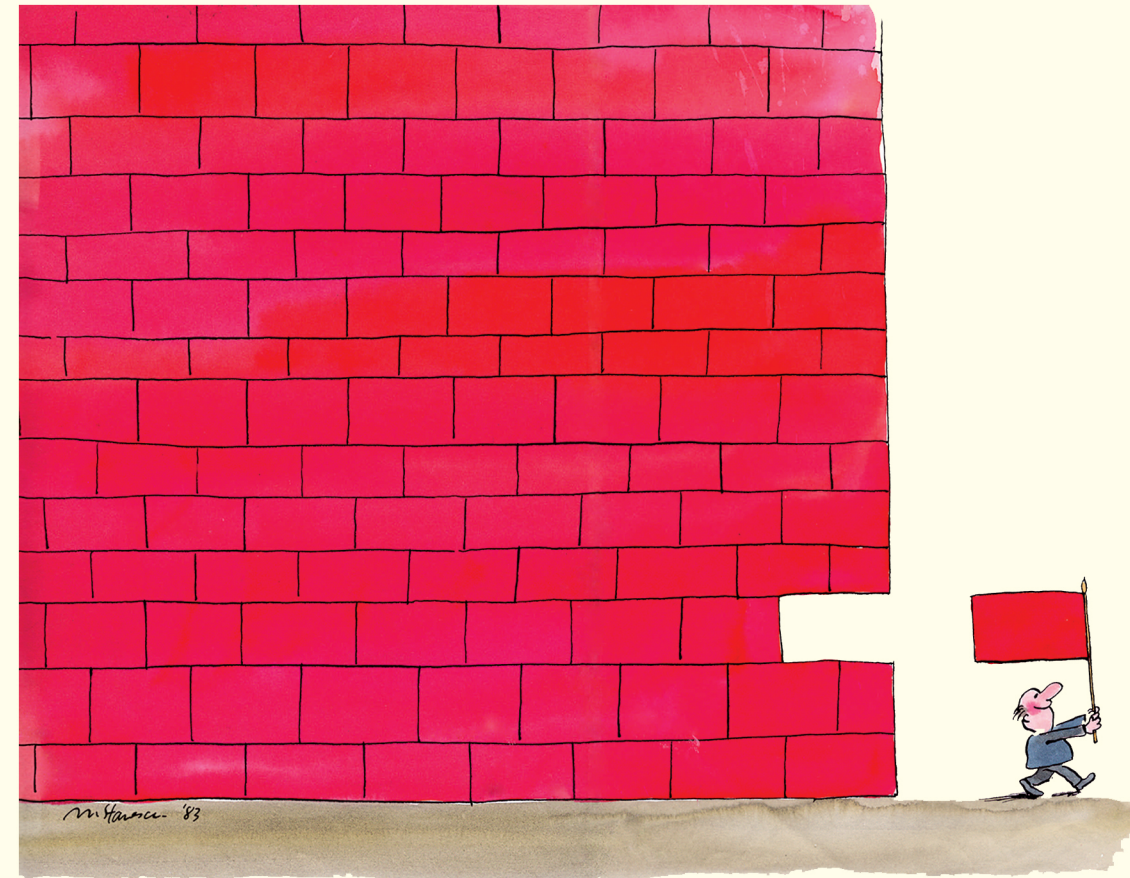
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To Cristina, without whom...

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List of Abbreviations

BCP	Bulgarian Communist Party
CC	Central Committee
CMEA	Council for Mutual Economic Assistance
CPCz	Communist Party of Czechoslovakia
CPSU	Communist Party of the Soviet Union
ECE	East-Central Europe
FRG	Federal Republic of Germany
FYP	Five-Year Plan
GDR	German Democratic Republic
HSWP	Hungarian Socialist Workers Party
HWP	Hungarian Workers Party
IMF	International Monetary Fund
KOR	<i>Komitet Obrony Robotników</i> (Committee for the Defense of Workers), Poland
NATO	North Atlantic Treaty Organization
NEM	New Economic Mechanism (Hungary)
NÖS	<i>Neues Ökonomisches System</i> (New Economic System), East Germany
NRT	National Roundtable (Hungary)
ORT	Opposition Roundtable (Hungary)

ÖSS	<i>Ökonomische System des Sozialismus</i> (Economic System of Socialism), East Germany
PUWP	Polish United Workers Party
RCP	Romanian Communist Party
RFE	Radio Free Europe
RWP	Romanian Workers Party
SED	<i>Sozialistische Einheitspartei Deutschlands</i> (Socialist Unity Party of Germany), East Germany
TYP	Two-Year Plan
UDF	Union of Democratic Forces (Bulgaria)
WTO	Warsaw Treaty Organization

INTRODUCTION

The 1989 events in East-Central Europe (ECE) took almost everybody by surprise. Their unexpected inception, convoluted unfolding and ambiguous outcome have been heavily discussed and debated. Theories and pseudo-theories have been put forward, and a variety of hypotheses and concepts have supported one another or clashed vigorously. Scholars and laypeople alike have attempted to make sense of those events and to assess their regional or global significance. Many have accepted that in 1989 six countries in ECE experienced a revolutionary situation. Some have contested, if not utterly denied, the revolutionary nature of those events. It has been argued that the 1989 events, which provoked the breakdown of the communist dictatorships in Poland, Hungary, East Germany, Czechoslovakia, Bulgaria and Romania, do not qualify as genuine revolutions on the model of the great modern revolutions such as the French or the Russian. Violence, it has been said, is the fundamental characteristic of a revolution

and therefore the 1989 events in ECE were not “true” revolutions for the very simple reason that violence was almost non-existent, with the exception of Romania. When examining the 1989 phenomenon, one is compelled to address three fundamental issues concerning its inception, unfolding and outcome, namely: the timing, sequence and nature (violent or non-violent, negotiated or non-negotiated) of events. Accordingly, one can formulate three key questions related to the revolutionary year 1989, as follows:

- (1) Why did those revolutionary events occur precisely in 1989?
- (2) Why did the communist regimes in ECE collapse in that particular order? and
- (3) Why were the 1989 events in ECE not violent, with the exception of Romania?

This book proposes a frame of analysis of the 1989 events in ECE and answers the three key questions presented above. To provide better overall understanding of the 1989 phenomenon, one should compare first the 1989 events and the “classic” revolutions of the modern age. In so doing, one must acknowledge three peculiar features of the 1989 events: they were non-utopian; they were not carried out in the name of a particular class; and they were non-violent (with the conspicuous exception of Romania). Considering these specific aspects, this author contends that the 1989 events in ECE can be termed “postmodern” revolutions. In order to explain the timing, sequence and nature of the 1989 revolutions in ECE, this work employs a model-building approach and puts forward an explanatory model which takes into consideration both the domestic developments and the entangled histories of the Soviet bloc countries over the period 1945–89. The main assumption is that the collapse of communist rule in ECE was provoked by an intricate and sometimes

unexpected interplay of structural, conjunctural and nation-specific factors, which ultimately determined the timing, sequence and nature of those events.

Understanding 1989 by Analogy

Faced with the complexity of the 1989 phenomenon, a first reaction would be to try to understand it by analogy. Thus, a simple and direct way of making sense of the nature of the 1989 events in ECE would be to compare them with the “classic” revolutions. This section concentrates on the debates over the revolutionary nature of the year 1989. In so doing, it focuses on three major elements that are generally considered key issues when analyzing the “great” revolutions of the modern age: revolutionary ideology, class character and violent nature. A first issue that deserves further examination is related to the idea of a “new beginning,” which characterized the “classic” revolutions. Hannah Arendt argued that the modern concept of revolution is “inextricably bound up with the notion that the course of history suddenly begins anew, that an entirely new story, a story never known or told before is about to unfold.”¹ According to Arendt, a crucial element of modern revolutions is the fact that “the idea of freedom and the experience of a new beginning should coincide.”² If one examines the claims by the revolutionaries throughout ECE, one finds that in terms of ideology the 1989 revolutions proved rather to be restorative, in the sense that the forces which lay behind the political changes did not want to engage in new utopian experiments. Many of the participants in the 1989 events simply envisaged a return to normality, a “normality” that was generally perceived as that of the affluent capitalist societies, and certainly not that of “actually existing socialism.”

According to Gale Stokes, what happened in 1989 was “not a revolution of total innovation, like the great classic revolutions, but rather the shucking off of a failed experiment in favor of an already existing model, pluralist democracy.”³ One can go even further and argue that many of the ordinary people who poured into the streets of the major cities of Sovietized Europe in 1989 were fascinated by the image – amply idealized, to be sure – of the prosperous West. People simply wanted to live better, and it was quite clear that the communist regimes were not able to provide for their populations in this respect. Robert Darnton, who witnessed the demise of state socialism in East Germany while spending the academic year 1989–90 at the Wissenschaftskolleg zu Berlin, recalls the discussion he had with an East German intellectual in Halle after the fall of the Berlin Wall: “Colleague D leaned over and looked hard into my face: ‘Two systems have competed for almost a half a century,’ he said. ‘Which has won?’ He gave the answer in English: ‘The American way of life.’”⁴

Moreover, the year 1989 in ECE was marked by a clear tendency to reject grand utopian projects. As Krishan Kumar notes: “The ‘pathos of novelty’ that Hannah Arendt saw as the hallmark of modern revolution has been conspicuously absent. Far from it, the revolution of 1989 has displayed something like nostalgia for the achievements of past revolutions. It did not wish to go forward; it wished to go back.”⁵ In a similar vein, Samuel N. Eisenstadt observes: “There was no totalistic, utopian vision rooted in eschatological expectations of a new type of society. The vision or visions promulgated in Central and Eastern Europe, calling for freedom from repressive totalitarian or authoritarian regimes, relied on various pragmatic adjustments.”⁶ Such a rejection of utopian ideas made a prominent theorist of the French revolution, such as François Furet, assert that “not a single new idea has come out of Eastern Europe in 1989.”⁷ The backward-looking aspect of 1989 did not escape an astute thinker like Jürgen Habermas, who

coined the term “rectifying revolution” when referring to 1989 events in ECE. According to Habermas, what happened in 1989 was a “revolution that is to some degree flowing backwards, one that clears the ground in order to catch up with developments previously missed out.”⁸

A second issue that needs clarification concerns the class character of the 1989 revolutions. When one compares the 1989 events in ECE with the French Revolution of 1789, one should ask oneself to what extent the events in 1989 constituted social revolutions. The concept of social revolution is employed by Theda Skocpol in her comparative analysis of the French, Russian and Chinese revolutions. According to Skocpol, social revolutions are “rapid, basic transformations of a society’s state and class structures; and they are accompanied and in part carried through by class-based revolts from below.”⁹ Mass mobilization was a fundamental pre-condition for the 1989 regime changes in ECE. As Habermas observes: “The presence of large masses gathering in squares and mobilizing on the streets managed, astoundingly, to disempower a regime that was armed to the teeth.”¹⁰ However, in the case of the 1989 events in ECE the class character of the revolts from below is seriously questionable. As Eisenstadt argues: “It would be difficult to say whether these were bourgeois or proletarian revolutions. Even in respect to the classical revolutions, these definitions are not always helpful or enlightening; in respect to the events in Eastern Europe they are meaningless.” The same author further asserts: “If there were specific social sectors predominant in bringing down [the communist regimes], they included some intellectuals, certain potential professionals, sometimes abetted by workers, who did not appear to be the bearers of any very strong class consciousness.”¹¹ To sum up, one can speak of determined crowds that poured into the streets of the major cities in ECE and thus contributed significantly to the breakdown of communist rule in the respective countries, but not

of a particular, self-conscious class that carried out the 1989 transformations.

Revolutionary violence represents a third crucial aspect that needs further discussion. Charles Tilly, a theorist of social change, states that the use of force is intrinsically linked with the idea of revolution. According to Tilly, a revolution is: “A forcible transfer of power over a state in the course of which at least two distinct blocs of contenders make incompatible claims to control the state, and some significant portion of the population subject to the state’s jurisdiction acquiesces in the claims of each bloc.”¹² Nonetheless, if violence represents an indispensable ingredient of a “true” revolution, then none of the 1989 events in Poland, Hungary, East Germany, Czechoslovakia or Bulgaria could be termed as revolutions. Ironically enough, if one employs such a perspective then only the events in Romania could be described as a “genuine” revolution. Indeed, many were initially impressed by the situation in Romania in December 1989. Timothy Garton Ash, for instance, wrote at the time: “Nobody hesitated to call what happened in Romania a revolution. After all, it really looked like one: angry crowds on the streets, tanks, government buildings in flames, the dictator put up against a wall and shot.”¹³ However, what happens after a certain event can dramatically change one’s perspective on that event, and this is exactly what happened with regard to the 1989 events in Romania. Thus, in his concluding remarks to an international conference dedicated to the celebration of ten years since the “miraculous year” 1989, Garton Ash stated bluntly: “Curiously enough the moment when people in the West finally thought there was a revolution was when they saw television pictures of Romania: crowds, tanks, shooting, blood in the streets. They said: ‘That – we know *that* is a revolution,’ and of course the joke is that it was the only one that wasn’t [original emphasis].”¹⁴

The Romanian case remains the most controversial, since the events in that country contradicted the non-violent, peaceful character of the 1989 transformations in ECE. At the same time, it was exactly the Romanian revolution “that wasn’t” which added to the revolutionary year 1989 the missing elements of “classic” revolutions. These elements, as J. F. Brown has perceptively argued, were: violence, bloodshed and tyrannicide.¹⁵ To be sure, Garton Ash was not alone in denying the revolutionary nature of the 1989 events in Romania. Numerous foreign and Romanian authors, disillusioned with the slow pace of the post-1989 transition to democracy have expressed the idea of a questionable 1989 revolution in Romania by using the word revolution in quotation marks.¹⁶ To conclude, a majority of the authors who have addressed the 1989 regime changes in ECE agree more or less with the idea that those events constituted revolutions, but a special kind of revolutions. The next section discusses the unusual nature of the 1989 events in ECE and contends that they can be defined as “postmodern” revolutions.

The Revolutions of 1989: “Postmodern” Revolutions?

As shown above, a major problem of definition arises when one attempts to compare the 1989 events in ECE with the “classic” revolutions of the modern age. There are at least three major differences between the 1989 events and the “great” revolutions, which can be summarized as follows: the 1989 transformations were not inspired by utopian visions, did not have a class character and were not violent, the Romanian exception notwithstanding. Considering these substantial differences, would it still be possible to speak of the “revolutions of 1989”? As an astute witness and critic of the 1989 phenomenon, Garton Ash confesses that there

is indeed a problem of assessing “in what sense this was a revolution” and aptly observes: “In fact we always have to qualify it; we call it ‘velvet,’ we call it ‘peaceful,’ we call it ‘evolutionary,’ someone ... calls it ‘rebirth’ not revolution, I call it ‘refolution.’”¹⁷ The term “refolution” is able to grasp the intricate mixture of revolution and reform, as well as the gradual and negotiated nature of the fundamental changes that took place in Poland and Hungary and initiated the 1989 changes throughout ECE. As Garton Ash observes: “It was in fact, a mixture of reform and revolution. At the time, I called it ‘refolution.’ There was a strong and essential element of change ‘from above,’ led by an enlightened minority in the still ruling communist parties. But there was also a vital element of popular pressure ‘from below.’” The blend of reform and revolution, he further pointed out, differed from one country to another: “In Hungary, there was rather more of the former, in Poland of the latter, yet in both countries the story was that of an interaction between the two. The interaction was, however, largely mediated by negotiations between ruling and opposition elites.”¹⁸

The first phase of the 1989 changes consisted of the “negotiated revolutions” in Poland and Hungary. It should be stressed from the outset that the crucial element of the Polish inception and the subsequent Hungarian ensuing of the 1989 wave of political changes in ECE was the roundtable talks principle observed in both countries by the communist power elites and the opposition groups. The Polish Roundtable Talks, which lasted from February to April, concluded with an agreement that recognized the legal right of Solidarity to exist and thus inaugurated the revolutionary year 1989. With regard to the meaning of the Polish Roundtable Talks, Adam Michnik noted: “The Round Table signified a willingness to transform what had been a policeman’s monologue into a political dialogue.”¹⁹ The term “negotiated revolutions” is perhaps the most appropriate to characterize the 1989 regime changes in Poland and Hungary. As Rudolf L. Tóké points out

in his path-breaking analysis of the Hungarian case, the term “negotiated” characterizes best the process of political bargaining that led to a regime change in that country.²⁰ According to Tóké, the term “negotiated revolution” has a twofold meaning, being “both a descriptive label and a metaphor to call attention to the political ambiguity of the outcome.”²¹ The idea of political bargaining within the constitutional framework of the Hungarian state was also emphasized by Béla K. Király, who argues that in 1989 Hungary experienced a “lawful revolution,” which occurred peacefully “within the constitutional framework of the state.”²² Former dissident János Kis has proposed the term “regime change,” understood as a “peculiar type of rapid social transformation.” According to Kis, the particularity of such a social transformation resides in the fact that it has elements pertaining to both revolution and reform.²³

The second phase of the 1989 political transformation in ECE consisted of the non-negotiated – i.e., not based on the roundtable talks principle – but non-violent revolutions in East Germany and Czechoslovakia. The major feature of these non-negotiated and non-violent revolutions was that political bargaining concerning the transition to a new political order occurred only after massive mobilization from below. The respective regimes did not open roundtable talks with the political opposition previous to the wave of mass mobilization, but refrained from ordering a bloodbath in order to suppress the street protests. Herbert Kitschelt et al. put forward the term “regime change by implosion,” which can be applied to the events in East Germany and Czechoslovakia: “Where implosions take place, the former elites have the least bargaining power in the transition and are shunted aside by opposition forces that quickly gain organizational and ideological predominance.”²⁴ For the particular case of East Germany, the term “peaceful revolution” (*friedliche Revolution*) has been employed. At the same time, as Karl-Dieter Opp argues, the events in the former German

Democratic Republic (GDR) can be defined as a “spontaneous revolution:” “The revolution in the GDR is so fascinating because it both occurred spontaneously and ensued nonviolently.... A revolution is *spontaneous* if the protests are not organized [original emphasis].”²⁵ As for the case of former Czechoslovakia, the most utilized term was that of “velvet revolution.”²⁶

With regard to the exit from “Balkan communism,” the cases of Bulgaria and Romania seemed quite opposed: while the regime change in Bulgaria was non-violent, Romania witnessed a bloody revolution. In Bulgaria, the day after the fall of the Berlin Wall a coup was initiated from within the inner circle of power and resulted in the replacement of the supreme leader of the Bulgarian communists with a younger apparatchik. The Bulgarian palace coup was aimed at initiating a “preemptive reform” meant to ensure the survival of the communist power elite into the new political order.²⁷ At the same time, the coup paved the way for the non-violent revolution in Bulgaria: the change at the top of the communist party triggered a massive and unprecedented mass mobilization under the lead of the united opposition, which resulted in a change of system in that country.

The communist regime in Romania was the last in a row to collapse during the revolutionary year 1989, and its downfall was marked by bloodshed and violence. The Romanian revolution was non-negotiated, and its violent character stood in contrast to the non-violent nature of the other 1989 revolutions in ECE. The opponents of the regime could not organize themselves politically under communism, and thus there was no organized dissident group that could fill the power vacuum generated by the sudden demise of the regime. Instead, there were ultimately those who learned politics by doing it, i.e., the second- and third-rank communist bureaucrats who took over the provisional government in those moments of general confusion. Although violent, Romania’s exit from communism has been perceived as being the

least radical in ECE because of the obvious continuity between the communist regime and its successor in terms of political elite recruitment. As Juan J. Linz and Alfred Stepan note, Romania was “the only country where a former high communist official was not only elected to the presidency in the first free election, but re-elected.”²⁸ Consequently, the Romanian revolution has been characterized as “doubtful,” “entangled,” “diverted,” “unfinished,” “stolen” or “gunned down.” Some have pointed towards the blend of revolution and restoration which characterized the Romanian situation and advanced the term “restolution.”²⁹ Others have gone further and stated openly that in December 1989 a coup d’état hindered the popular uprising in becoming a revolution.³⁰

In spite of these diverse paths out of communism, there have been attempts at finding a term able to characterize the overall exit from communism of the six countries in ECE discussed here. Leslie Holmes coined the term “double rejective revolutions:” the first rejection was that of the external domination of the Soviet Union over the respective countries, while the second rejection was that of communism as a system of power.³¹ An iconoclastic definition of the revolutionary year 1989 was coined by Karol Soltan, who characterized it as a rebirth: “The events of 1989 were *not* a revolution (neither liberal, nor self-limiting, nor velvet, nor anti-revolutionary). They were *not* simply reforms or restoration. They *were* a rebirth, and rebirths (not revolutions, as Marxists would have it) are the locomotives of history [original emphasis].”³² Soltan argues that the true meaning of the year 1989 could be found in what he perceives as an attempt of modern civilization to return to its “symbolic origins” in the Renaissance. As he further pointed out: “In a modernity that re-establishes continuity with its symbolic origins in the Renaissance, the events of 1989 can be celebrated as exemplary: in them more than anywhere else we see revolution replaced by rebirth.”³³ When looking for a definition of 1989, one could also start from the very fact that the 1989 events took power

elites and populations by surprise. True, revolutions are generally unexpected and perhaps this is why they represent a fascinating research topic. Still, in the case of the 1989 events one could employ a term that was originally used by Paul Kecskemeti to characterize what happened in 1956 in Hungary, and call them the “unexpected revolutions.”³⁴

The revolutions of 1989 did not initiate a “new beginning” because they did not seek for one. At stake was the departure from a project that had aimed at solving a crisis of modernity by serving the cause of freedom and equality and which had proved to be an utter failure. Consequently, violence, utopian dreams and class struggle were not on the agenda of a majority of the revolutionaries of 1989 and thus one may advance the idea that the revolutions of 1989 were the first revolutions of the postmodern age.³⁵ The communist regimes, like the fascist ones, were “modern dictatorships.” As Jürgen Kocka perceptively argues, the causes they served, as well as their scopes and means, were intrinsically modern: “For the communist and fascist dictatorships of the twentieth century the rule was: the modernity of their methods and goals corresponded to the modernity of their causes.”³⁶ Nonetheless, there was something new that made the 1989 revolutions which brought down the communist dictatorships in the six countries addressed by the present work not only different from the “classic” revolutions, but also unique.

In this respect, Eisenstadt’s discussion on the “postmodern” features of 1989 seen as an upheaval against the failed project of modernity in Sovietized Europe is perhaps the most appropriate to characterize those events. In Eisenstadt’s view, one could identify similarities between 1989 and the “classic” revolutions with regard to: “The close relations among popular protests, struggles in the center, and the intellectual groups that developed; the place of principled protest; [and] the emphasis on the legitimacy of such protest, central in all of them.”³⁷ The same author identified a

series of elements present in the 1989 events that could be compared with those developments in western societies that were described as “postmodern.”³⁸ According to Eisenstadt, these elements were: “The decharismatization of the centers, the weakening of the overall societywide utopian political vision and of the missionary-ideological components.” As he further points out: “Even when the belief in democracy and the free market sometimes evince such elements, there is a concomitant disposition of many utopian orientations to disperse; ‘daily’ and semi-private spheres of life become central.”³⁹

At the same time, one should ask oneself if the term “postmodern” could be applied indiscriminately to all six communist countries which witnessed a change of regime in 1989, from the most economically developed ones, i.e., East Germany and Czechoslovakia to the least economically developed ones, i.e., Bulgaria and Romania. In this respect, one should be reminded the words of sociologist Daniel Chirot: “No East European country, not even Romania, was an Ethiopia or a Burma, with famine and a reversion to primitive, local subsistence economies.”⁴⁰ According to Chirot, at the time of the 1989 regime changes Romania and to some extent Poland were experiencing economic difficulties, but their economies were far from the situation of the troubled countries of the so-called Third World. The same author further observed: “Other economies – in Hungary, but even more so in Czechoslovakia and East Germany – were failures only by the standards of the most advanced capitalist economies. On a world scale these were rich, well-developed economies, not poor ones.”⁴¹ Looking retrospectively, it may be argued that the differences between the developed countries of the First World and the developing communist countries of the Second World, although appreciable, proved to be surmountable in the aftermath of the 1989 revolutions as compared to the wide gap that still

separates both from the less developed countries of the Third World.

To answer the three key questions concerning the 1989 phenomenon formulated above and thus explain the timing, sequence and nature of the “postmodern” revolutions of 1989, this author employs a model-building approach. The explanatory model put forward in Chapter One is then applied in the following chapters, i.e., chapters Two to Seven, to all six countries which witnessed a regime change during the revolutionary year 1989, namely: Poland, Hungary, East Germany, Czechoslovakia, Bulgaria and Romania.

CHAPTER ONE

Conceptual Framework and Methodological Approach

The revolutions of 1989 differed from the classic revolutions in the sense that an immediate potential for open and fatal violence did exist, but violence was eventually avoided with the exception of Romania. Numerous authors have argued that violence should be considered an essential ingredient of a genuine revolution. However, according to such a criterion only the 1989 events in Romania could be characterized as a “true” revolution. What characterized the 1989 revolutions was the immediate potential for open and fatal violence and not necessarily the actual recourse to it. This author contends that one should take into consideration three main issues when devising a working definition applicable to all the revolutions of 1989: (1) mass mobilization and protest were an important precondition; (2) violence was the exception and not the norm; and (3) the transnational dimension was crucial; entanglements that went beyond the national borders of the Soviet

Notes for this chapter begin on page 353.

bloc countries influenced significantly the inception, unfolding and outcome of the 1989 revolutions.

The following three definitions of a revolution have been considered in order to coin the definition of a revolution employed by the present work with a view to providing a causal explanation for the breakdown of state socialism in ECE: (1) “A revolution is a rapid, fundamental, and violent domestic change in the dominant values and myths of a society, in its political institutions, social structure, leadership, and government activity and policies” (Samuel P. Huntington); (2) A revolution is: “A rapid and fundamental change of system” (Leslie Holmes); and (3) A revolution is: “The replacement of the elite and the introduction of a new political or economic order after (violent or nonviolent) protests by the population” (Karl-Dieter Opp).¹ From these definitions and taking into account the importance of the international context in shaping the 1989 revolutionary process in ECE, the following working definition of a revolution has been devised, which will be utilized throughout the present work: *A revolution is a rapid and fundamental domestic change in the dominant values and myths of a society, in its political institutions, social structure, leadership and government activity and policies, following violent or non-violent mass protests, which occurs in a particular regional and international context.*

What Types of Communist Regimes Collapsed in 1989?

Having reached a working definition of a revolution applicable to all six revolutions in ECE, let us analyze the major features of the regimes that collapsed during the revolutionary year 1989. One should note that a single model, the Stalinist one, was imposed almost simultaneously on the six countries under scrutiny in the

aftermath of World War II. This model suffered successive transformations in the countries discussed in this book and gave birth to national-communisms, which in turn collapsed following various patterns ranging from negotiated to bloody revolutions. In other words, the Stalinist dictatorships established in ECE evolved into a variety of dictatorships, and thus a major question arises: How many types of communist dictatorships can one discern among the six that collapsed in 1989?

To paraphrase Garton Ash, the six communist dictatorships that collapsed in the course of the year 1989 need qualifying as much as the revolutions that brought them down. Since variations among the Soviet bloc countries did exist, one has to specify what kinds of “modern dictatorships” were the communist dictatorships in the six countries under discussion. This author contends that the 1989 revolutions in ECE brought down three types of communist dictatorships, which can be termed as follows: (1) “national-accommodative” (Poland and Hungary); (2) “welfare” (East Germany and Czechoslovakia); and (3) modernizing-nationalizing (Bulgaria and Romania). The term “national-accommodative” communist dictatorship employed by this author for Poland and Hungary was coined by Kitschelt et al. who distinguish between “bureaucratic-authoritarian,” “national-accommodative” and “patrimonial” communist regimes.² In 1989, the first two revolutions originated in the camp of the “national-accommodative” communist dictatorships: Poland and Hungary went out of communism through “negotiated revolutions” based on the roundtable talks principle. To characterize the communist dictatorships in East Germany and Czechoslovakia – although the term applies more to the Czech lands than to Slovakia, this author follows Konrad H. Jarausch, who coined the concept of “welfare dictatorship.” As Jarausch showed in his analysis of the former GDR, such regimes were characterized by a fundamental contradiction between “care and coercion.”³ The demise of the

“welfare dictatorships” in East Germany and Czechoslovakia occurred through non-negotiated and non-violent revolutions, which erupted in the aftermath of the “negotiated revolutions” in neighboring Poland and Hungary. As for Bulgaria and Romania, this author contends that the communist dictatorships established in these countries can be termed as *modernizing-nationalizing* dictatorships. The emphasis on the “dynamic political stance” in this respect is crucial: the communist regimes in both countries perceived their party-states in the making as not completely modern and national, and therefore devised policies aimed at spurring industrial development and creating ethnically homogenous “socialist” nations.⁴

A Model-Building Approach

The complexity of the 1989 phenomenon does not allow for a single-factor explanation. A variety of factors influenced the political decisions by incumbents and opposition groups in ECE throughout the revolutionary year 1989. A sequence of contingent decisions by incumbents clashed with decisions by opposition political actors aiming at a radical system change in a particular window of opportunity. Therefore, a causal explanation for the inception, unfolding, and outcome of the 1989 revolutions in ECE should take into consideration path dependence, contingency and agency. The issue of path dependence is highly relevant when discussing the process of decision-making at the level of the ruling elites. As Bernhard Ebbinghaus observes: “Actors are rarely in a situation in which they can ignore the past and decide *de novo*; their decisions are bound by past and current institutions.”⁵

Considering the variety of the factors which contributed to the demise of the six communist regimes in ECE during the “miraculous year” 1989, the present work employs a model-

building approach. The main assumption that lies at the foundation of the model presented below is that the 1989 revolutions were determined by a complicated and sometimes perplexing aggregation of structural, conjunctural and nation-specific factors. These factors operated and interacted in various ways in each of the countries analyzed, but they were nevertheless present in each case. Such a model is able to accommodate issues of path dependence, patterns of compliance and contestation under communist rule, and questions of interdependence at both international and Soviet bloc level. The particular way in which the above-mentioned factors aggregated determined eventually the nature of the revolution in each of the cases discussed, i.e., negotiated or non-negotiated, peaceful or violent, as well as the order in which the six communist dictatorships were overthrown. This approach, which considers the three groups of factors presented above, has been inspired by the work of Ole Nørgaard and Steven L. Sampson. In their 1984 study “Poland’s Crisis and East European Socialism,” the two authors explained the birth of the Polish Solidarity as an outcome of social and cultural factors.⁶ Let us examine the way Nørgaard and Sampson defined the three categories of factors, i.e., structural, conjunctural and specific, in their pioneering work.

Structural factors refer to “the relations between society’s economic and political organization on the one hand, and the expectations and demands of key social groups on the other. Structural factors are relevant to all the socialist countries.” As for the conjunctural factors, the examination of these aims at explaining “why the structural crisis appears at a certain point in time.” Furthermore, as the two authors point out, “conjunctural factors are neither intrinsically socialist nor particularly Polish in origin.” Finally, Nørgaard and Sampson introduce the nation-specific factors, whose role is “to explain why contradictions are expressed differently from one country to another.” With regard

to these factors, the same authors note: “These *nation-specific factors* (not to be confused with nationalism) determine the precise nature of the social response to the structural and conjunctural factors [original emphasis].”⁷

The following section discusses the set of structural, conjunctural and nation-specific factors identified by this author as relevant for explaining the 1989 revolutions in ECE. These factors are discussed below beginning with the structural factors, which were common to all societies where state socialism came into being by the imposition of the Soviet model in the aftermath of World War II and whose exit from communism occurred during the same year 1989.

Structural Factors

In the terms of the present analysis, two structural factors are of prime importance: economic failure and ideological decay. Economic failure refers primarily to the perceived failure of state socialism to offer a living standard similar to that of the more advanced Western societies, and not necessarily to the absolute failure of those regimes to achieve a certain level of economic development. In the countries of “actually existing socialism” economic performance was an essential source of legitimation for the regime. At the same time, the economies of the Sovietized countries in ECE were transformed in accordance with the Stalinist model of command economy, which meant that the party-state in the making was both proprietor and conductor of the economy.⁸ The slogan “Heavy industry at all costs” epitomized the developmental pattern imposed by the communist parties in power through central planning.⁹ However, the resources available did not permit a simultaneous accelerated growth of primary and secondary sectors. Since the decision regarding which sectors were

to be further developed was primarily political, the central planners favored the producer goods sector. Thus, the consumer goods sector was generally neglected in favor of heavy industry. The policy of sustained investments in heavy industry resulted in increasing shortages of consumer goods that directly affected the population.¹⁰ As the Polish economist Jan Rutkowski puts it: “The economic potential increases, but this does not result in the expansion of individual consumption. This systemic pressure to increase socially unproductive capital assets hits only one limit – the limit of social resistance.”¹¹ The constant deprivations to which consumers throughout ECE were subjected – albeit to different degrees, depending on the period and the country – contributed to the final demise of the communist regimes in ECE. As Derek H. Aldcroft and Steven Morewood observe: “The consumer was asked to endure innumerable deprivations which would have been intolerable in the West and which ultimately sparked revolution in Eastern Europe.”¹²

The relationship between economic performance and the outbreak of social protest was extensively analyzed in the case of communist Poland. As Bartłomiej Kamiński demonstrates, the Polish communist economy went through four major “investment cycles,” as follows: (1) 1949–57; (2) 1958–71; (3) 1972–82; and (4) 1983–88.¹³ Each of these cycles ended with a deep political crisis. The first three cycles concluded with the crises of 1956, 1970 and 1981, which were each in turn followed by a “normalization” period, which ensured the survival of the regime. All these crises led to a change at the top of the hierarchy of the Polish United Workers Party (PUWP). The fourth cycle, 1983–88, ended with a crisis that brought down the communist regime in Poland and initiated the 1989 “snowballing effect,” i.e., the chain reaction that led to the demise of communist regimes throughout ECE. The way economic failure was perceived by the populations living in each of the six countries differed from country

to country. In some cases, it was about relative dissatisfaction, born of the comparison between the respective societies and the affluent societies of the West, as in the cases of Hungary, East Germany and Czechoslovakia. In other cases, such as that of Romania, the severe food crisis led also to absolute dissatisfaction.

In communist Hungary, for instance, the regime's attempts at reforming the command economy bore fruit during the 1970s. This led to the rising of social expectations, which could not be fulfilled during the 1980s and thus generated relative dissatisfaction with the regime towards the end of the decade. It should be remembered that in the late 1960s Hungarian communists engaged in a systemic change of the command economy. In 1968, the regime introduced a set of economic reforms known as the New Economic Mechanism (NEM). Economist János Kornai argued that the Hungarian reform, which consisted in the "radical abolition of short-term mandatory planning," proved its viability in spite of a partially developed market mechanism.¹⁴ The NEM succeeded in initiating a timid institutional devolution of the regime and in developing an enterprise culture, although some authors argue that it failed in terms of macroeconomic results. People engaged in supplementary working hours in the second economy, in addition to the job they had in the first economy, in order to increase their income.¹⁵ Towards the late 1980s, the performance of the economy started to diminish. If one applies the theory of short-term setbacks to the Hungarian case, the situation in the late 1980s can be explained as follows: after the "golden period" of high consumption and rising expectations, the period of relative economic stagnation during the 1980s led to a rise of societal dissatisfaction with the regime.

Communist Romania represents perhaps the most telling example of the economic failure of state socialism. A timid attempt to reform the command economy in that country was made in the late 1960s. Its main proponent, however, did not succeed in

face of the supporters of a centrally planned economy, of which the most prominent was the supreme leader of the party himself, and was marginalized beginning in 1968. Although the first signs of a deep economic crisis appeared in the mid-1970s, the party took the political decision to pursue the pattern of extensive development of steel and heavy industries. In the early 1980s, another political decision put a considerable strain on the already declining economy of the country: Nicolae Ceaușescu decided to pay back Romania's external debt, which in late 1981 rose to some USD 10.4 billion. In order to achieve this goal, the regime took the measure of drastically reducing imports. As a consequence, beginning with 1981–82, Romania entered a period of chronic shortages of foodstuffs and other basic consumer goods such as soap, toothpaste and detergents. During the 1980s, Romania witnessed a decline in the standard of living "unmatched since the famine of the postwar period," as an informed observer of Romanian affairs put it.¹⁶ As a consequence of the regime's mistaken economic policies, in 1989 the situation in Romania was significantly different from that in the rest of the Sovietized Europe, with the possible exception of Albania: due to the miseries of everyday life, the potential for protest of a majority of the population was appreciable.

This book addresses the problem of real or perceived economic failure in each of the six cases under scrutiny in the context of the strategies put forward by those regimes to achieve economic legitimacy. Since communist rule in ECE was imposed from abroad, the communist power elites in ECE had a fundamental legitimacy deficit. Consequently, the issue of increasing prosperity and raising the living standard of the population as a means of achieving legitimacy became central for the communist parties in Sovietized ECE. Throughout this book, the analysis of the economic performance of the six communist regimes concentrates on the economic policies adopted by those regimes and on their efforts

aimed at reconciling their political goals with the social and economic realities. Accordingly, issues such as planning mechanisms, organization of production and labor, formation of prices, financial control, and the like are not the main focus of this book.¹⁷

Ideological decay, or the overall erosion of the revolutionary ideology, refers to the fading away of the utopian goal of building a radically new, classless society.¹⁸ This element is common to all six countries under discussion, where state socialism was institutionalized only through a “second revolution” or a “revolution from above.” The “revolutionary struggle” of the local communists did not encompass either a “first revolution” on the model of the Bolshevik Revolution or a mixture of revolution and independence war on the model of Iosip Broz Tito’s partisan war in Yugoslavia. As a consequence, the communist elites in the six countries under scrutiny carried out solely a “revolution from above.” The concept of “revolution from above” is understood in the terms of Robert C. Tucker’s analysis of the “second” Soviet revolution of 1928–41. As Tucker noted: “The revolution from above was a state-initiated, state-directed, and state-enforced process State power was the driving force of economic, political, social, and cultural change that was revolutionary in rapidity of accomplishment, forcible methods, and transformative effect.”¹⁹ A series of events which followed Nikita S. Khrushchev’s “secret speech” in the front of the Twentieth Congress of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union (CPSU), most prominently the Hungarian revolution of October–November 1956, indicated that ideology had undeniably lost its strength in Sovietized Europe. Simply put, ideological decay describes – to use Andrzej Walicki’s inspired term – the post-1956 situation in which communism gradually ceased to represent a “unifying Final Goal.”²⁰

Ideological decay manifested differently in the six countries under scrutiny. In Hungary, for instance, ideology ceased to be a driving force in the regime’s relationship with Hungarian society in the

aftermath of the 1956 revolution. In former Czechoslovakia, this happened in 1968 after the suppression of the Prague Spring by the Soviet-led invasion of the country by Warsaw Treaty Organization (WTO) troops. In other cases, anti-fascism or nationalism acted for a while in support of the respective regimes and thus alleviated the undermining effects of ideological decay. In the case of East Germany, anti-fascism provided an ideological support for the regime. After the suppression of the June 1953 working-class revolt, it became quite clear that the bulk of the population did not pay much attention to the propaganda machine which demonized the allegedly “imperialistic” West Germany. On the contrary, the increased migration to West Germany over the period 1953–61 forced the regime in East Germany to erect the Berlin Wall in August 1961, which underlined the “moral, political, and economic” failure of state socialism in that country.²¹ In the Romanian case, ideological decay was alleviated to some extent by the communist elite’s post-1956 return to traditional values and gradual instrumentalization of nationalism. After 1968, under the rule of Ceaușescu, the communist regime in Romania engaged in a sustained policy of assimilating ethnic minorities, of which the first target was the Hungarian one. An outburst of ethnic nationalism also occurred in neighboring Bulgaria, where the communist regime under Todor Zhivkov took the decision to accelerate the forced assimilation of the ethnic Turks – a policy that is known as the “revival” or the “regenerative” process – in order to mitigate popular discontent with the regime’s economic performance.²²

Conjunctural Factors

Contingency played an important role in the unfolding of the 1989 events in ECE. This work stresses the role of the conjunctural factors in the inception and unfolding of the revolutions of 1989. Conjunctural factors are of two kinds, i.e., internal and external.²³

Among internal conjunctural factors one can mention the following: natural catastrophes (earthquakes, floods or drought), unusually mild weather, the coming of age of a new generation, etc. The internal conjunctural factors contributed to a lesser extent to the final demise of the communist regimes in ECE, but they should not be neglected. For instance, in the Romanian case a major internal conjunctural factor was the coming of age of the 1967–69 baby boom resulted from the policy of forced natality launched by Ceaușescu after his coming to power in 1965. Furthermore, as many participants in the 1989 events in Timișoara and Bucharest pointed out, the exceptionally mild weather for the month of December also played a role in the way the 1989 events unfolded in Romania.

The external conjuncture had a decisive impact on the breakdown of all the six communist regimes in ECE. Three external conjunctural factors were often invoked in relation to the 1989 revolutions, namely, the “Vatican,” “Reagan,” and “Gorbachev” factors. For instance, the 1978 election of a Polish Pope had a direct influence on the development of dissident stances in Poland in the late 1970s and throughout the 1980s. This factor has to be considered especially when discussing the initiation of the 1989 revolution in Poland. Similarly, one has to consider the project of the American President Ronald Reagan (1981–89) of establishing a high-tech spatial weapon system that weakened the Soviet Union both economically and militarily and thus influenced the Soviet politics in ECE. The coming to power of Mikhail S. Gorbachev, who became secretary general of the CPSU in March 1985 and the launch of his program of reforms were events that had an immense impact on the communist regimes in Sovietized Europe. Moscow’s renunciation of the Brezhnev Doctrine was an event of paramount importance, which paved the way for the political transformations in ECE.

At the same time, one cannot explain the chain reaction that took place in 1989 in ECE without taking into consideration the

transnational aspect and the issue of interdependence at the Soviet bloc level.²⁴ As Huntington argues, “snowballing” is one of the possible explanations of the “democratization waves” in the late twentieth century:

An important cause for x in one country may be the occurrence of x in another country. If the x ’s occurred absolutely simultaneously, this would be impossible. Perfect simultaneity, however, is very rare, and the possibility of isolated simultaneity is becoming rarer. Knowledge of significant political events is increasingly transmitted almost instantaneously around the world. Hence, event x in one country is increasingly capable of triggering a comparable event almost simultaneously in a different country.²⁵

International media, Radio Free Europe (RFE) most prominently, contributed significantly to the initiation of a chain reaction throughout ECE. By broadcasting continuously the news about the initiation of the 1989 changes in Poland, these radio stations prepared the opposition groups and the populations in neighboring countries for a similar change. The “snowballing effect” played an instrumental role in creating a special state of mind throughout the region, at both the level of the communist ruling elites and the level of the populations. It must be stressed, however, that the “snowballing effect” did not operate in the case of communist Poland.

All the factors presented above were important, and their significance is going to be assessed when discussing each of the six cases under scrutiny. Of all these factors, the “Gorbachev factor” was particularly influential and deserves further discussion. Looking for the causes of the breakdown of communist rule in ECE, Leszek Kołakowski observes: “Among the many factors, the personal contribution of Mikhail Sergeevich Gorbachev cannot be omitted, though it is evident that he both shaped events and was shaped

by them.”²⁶ Gorbachev’s insistence on the need for “renewal” and “new thinking” revealed the crisis of the Soviet system. As Kołakowski further pointed out: “Still, by repeatedly insisting that fundamental though ill-defined changes were urgently needed, he revealed the empire’s lack of self-confidence.”²⁷ The Soviet policy of non-intervention during the “miraculous year 1989” eased the way towards “negotiated” or “peaceful” revolutions in ECE, with the notable exception of Romania. As Archie Brown puts it: “The key to change in Eastern Europe was Gorbachev’s decision in principle to abandon Soviet foreign military interventions and his refusal to contemplate resort to them, even when the Soviet Union was faced with an utterly changed relationship with the area it had controlled since the end of the Second World War.”²⁸ Andrew C. Janos goes further and questions those analyses which have qualified the 1989 events as revolutions. Thus, Janos argues that the international context was the determining factor for the outbreak of the 1989 revolutions: “In reality, however, the locus of change was in the international sphere, where the Soviet empire had relinquished its erstwhile holdings in order to effect a deal with its global adversaries.”²⁹

After 1968, relations between the USSR and the Sovietized countries of ECE stayed under the sign of the Brezhnev Doctrine, which asserted that the USSR had the right to intervene in any country in which the communist government was threatened. After Gorbachev’s coming to power, things changed fundamentally, but the leaders of the Sovietized countries in ECE seemed not to understand that. At least, this was the impression of Aleksandr Yakovlev, who confesses in a book-length interview with Lilly Marcou: “The former leaders of the East European countries did not take seriously, did not want to believe what Mikhail Sergeyevich kept telling them: ‘From now on, the political choice in these countries belongs to their peoples, everything is going to be done in accordance with their options.’”³⁰ Under

Gorbachev, the Sinatra Doctrine replaced the Brezhnev Doctrine, and this was made clear by the Soviet Foreign Ministry spokesman, Gennady Gerasimov, on 25 October 1989. Ironically enough, Gerasimov defined the so-called Sinatra Doctrine by stating that every country must decide for itself the path to be pursued and referring to Frank Sinatra’s song “My Way.”³¹

Nation-Specific Factors

The particular aspects related to the inception, unfolding and outcome of the 1989 revolutions need further explanation. A set of nation-specific factors should be identified that would enable us to ascertain the intricate relationships between regime and society in ECE, focusing on patterns of compliance or conflict with authority. This quest for specific patterns of interaction between regime and society brings us to the study of cultural values, attitudinal patterns and behavioral propensities. Culture provides a framework through which incumbents, political leaders or power elites, tend to understand the claims and actions of their opponents and react to them, and vice versa. As Marc Howard Ross puts it: “Culture offers significant resources that leaders and groups use as instruments of organization and mobilization.”³² Furthermore, when attempting to provide a causal explanation for the particular order in which the 1989 revolutions unfolded, one should also be reminded of the concept of “repertoires of collective action.” The concept was coined by Tilly, who defines them as: “A limited set of routines that are learned, shared, and acted out through a relatively deliberate process of choices. Repertoires are learned cultural creations.”³³

The present work employs the concept of *political culture* in order to analyze the specific relationships between political structures and cultures, as well as the particular patterns of

interaction between regime and society for the six countries under scrutiny. The purpose of such an analysis is to explain the nature of change, i.e., violent or non-violent, as well as the particular order in which the six communist dictatorships in ECE collapsed. In their 1963 classic work, *The Civic Culture: Political Attitudes and Democracy in Five Nations*, Gabriel A. Almond and Sidney Verba define the concept as follows: "The term 'political culture' thus refers to the specifically political orientations – attitudes towards the political system and its various parts, and attitudes toward the role of the self in the system.... It is a set of orientations toward a special set of social objects and processes."³⁴ Subsequent definitions have not departed much from the initial understanding of the concept. For instance, Almond and G. Bingham Powell Jr. propose a brief definition, which reads as follows: "A political culture is a particular distribution of political attitudes, values, feelings, information and skills. As people's attitudes affect what they will do, a nation's political culture affects the conduct of its citizens and leaders throughout the political system."³⁵ Verba provides an insightful and easily remembered definition of political culture by stating that it explains how "people respond to what they perceive of politics and how they interpret what they see."³⁶ Larry Diamond defines political culture as follows: "A people's dominant beliefs, attitudes, values, sentiments, and evaluation about the political system of its country, and the role of the self in that system,"³⁷ while Ben Rosamond provides the following definition: "The set of values, beliefs and attitudes within which a political system operates."³⁸

A further discussion is nevertheless necessary with regard to the concept of political culture and its uses in the particular case of communist studies. Numerous authors have emphasized the importance of political culture theory for explaining the intricate relationship between attitudes and behavior under communist rule. In this respect, Archie Brown aptly points out: "The peculiar

relevance of the study of 'political culture' in relation to change and continuity in communist states lies in the fact that the goals of total political, economic and cultural transformation have been pursued by ruling communist parties in societies with the most diverse historical and cultural traditions."³⁹ In a similar vein, Almond observes that communist rule might be considered a "natural experiment" in attitude change and argued in favor of employing political culture theory for the analysis of communist regimes in order to test its explanatory power:

The argument would be that however powerful the effort, however repressive the structure, however monopolistic and persuasive the media, however tempting the incentive system, political culture would impose significant constraints on effective behavioral and structural change because underlying attitudes would tend to persist to a significant degree and for a significant period of time.⁴⁰

Brown's scholarship on political cultures in communist regimes deserves a particular attention. According to Brown, political culture is: "The subjective perception of history and politics, the fundamental beliefs and values, the foci of identification and loyalty, and the political knowledge and expectations which are the product of the specific historical experience of nations and groups."⁴¹ At the same time, Brown insists on making an analytical distinction between political culture and political behavior. Thus, he argues in favor of focusing solely on subjective orientations to the political process and excluding patterns of political behavior from the political culture approach when one engages in the study of communist regimes in general.⁴²

The present work is concerned with both beliefs and actions. As Kenneth Jowitt perceptively observes, numerous analyses of communist regimes "tended to discount or neglect the role of culture, largely because the relationship between regime and society

was viewed simply as a pattern of domination-subordination.”⁴³ The same author insists on the necessity of analyzing “the visible and systematic impact society has on the character, quality, and style of political life” in order to explain the nature of communist political structures and cultures. According to Jowitt, political culture is: “The set of informal, adaptative postures – behavioral and attitudinal – that emerge in response to and interact with the set of formal definitions – ideological, policy, and institutional – that characterize a given level of society.”⁴⁴

By focusing on both attitudes and behavior, as Jowitt suggests, the present work discusses the patterns of conduct of power elites and social actors throughout the communist period, thus acknowledging that, in their quest to create radically new polities on the Soviet model, the party-states in ECE engaged in a conscious and sustained effort of imposing new political values from above. The process of political socialization under the communist regimes displayed two contrasting facets. New, official and “sound,” values were inculcated during adolescence and adulthood through schooling and socialization within official organizations, as well as by the centrally controlled mass media. At the same time, old, traditional values proved to be more resilient than previously thought and were handed down to younger generations within the family environment, thus contributing to the development of oppositional stances towards the regime.

In order to analyze the process described above, this study draws on the three types of political culture defined by Jowitt: elite, regime and community political culture. “Elite political culture” is defined as: “A set of informal adaptative (behavioral and attitudinal) postures that emerge as response to and consequence of a given elite’s identity-forming experiences.” “Regime political culture” is understood as: “A set of informal adaptative (behavioral and attitudinal) postures that emerge in response to the institutional definition of social, economic, and political life.”

Finally, “community political culture” is defined as: “A set of informal adaptative (behavioral and attitudinal) postures that emerge in response to the historical relationships between regime and community.”⁴⁵ Two of the three types of political culture discussed above, i.e., regime and community political cultures, are essential in explaining the collapse of the communist regimes in ECE. Instead of a classless society, in the Sovietized countries of ECE a dichotomous, adversarial picture of society gradually emerged. Those societies became increasingly polarized and divided into *us* (the population, including those members of the elite who turned against the regime) and *them* (the regime, i.e., the nomenklatura and the secret police, as well as those members of the elite – be it cultural, technical or military, who chose to remain faithful to it).

Consequently, this work addresses the two major political cultures – regime and community – which became truly adversarial by the end of the 1980s, and which are understood in the terms of Jowitt’s frame of analysis. At the same time, it should be mentioned that these two political cultures were not fundamentally adversarial throughout the entire communist period. Since the present work is concerned with both beliefs and actions, it addresses the main attitudinal and behavioral patterns which emerged during the communist period at the regime and community levels. The interplay of these attitudinal and behavioral patterns determined the specific nature of the 1989 revolutions in each of the six countries discussed. In the terms of the present analysis, the regime political culture is understood as the official political culture, i.e., the political culture of the respective communist regime (Polish, Hungarian, East German, Czechoslovak, Bulgarian, or Romanian). In analyzing the nature of the 1989 revolutions, the regime political culture is of crucial importance. In the Polish case, for instance, the ruling elite opted for a scenario of political transformation based on “path departure.” This meant a “gradual adaptation

through partial renewal of institutional arrangements and limited redirection of core principles,” which ultimately initiated the “negotiated revolution” in Poland. In Romania, the ruling elite remained united around the supreme leader and decided for “path stabilization.” This meant a “marginal adaptation to environmental changes without changing core principles,” and consequently the Romanian revolution was the only violent one among the 1989 revolutions in ECE.⁴⁶ As far as the community political culture is concerned, the most significant are its subcultures, which in the terms of the present analysis are defined as the political cultures of resistance against the regime (related primarily to intellectual dissent and working-class protest). To conclude, the two nation-specific factors that determined the nature (violent or non-violent), as well as the outcome of the 1989 revolutions are: (1) the political culture of the respective communist regime; and (2) the political culture(s) of resistance against that regime.

How the Model Works: Explaining the Timing, Sequence and Nature of the 1989 Events

Timing

To answer the question: “Why did the revolutions in ECE occur precisely in 1989?” one is compelled to inquire: “Why did the Polish ‘negotiated’ revolution occur precisely in 1989?” The case of Poland is by far the most complicated because the “snowballing effect” did not operate in its case. In order to explain why the 1989 transformations were initiated in Poland we have to go back to the crisis of 1980–81 from which both the power elite and the opposition that negotiated the transition to a new political order in

1989 were born. As is well known, communist Poland went through four major crises, in 1956, 1970, 1980–81 and 1988–89. All these crises resulted in major political changes at the level of the power elite. It should be remembered, however, that the crises of 1956, 1970 and 1980–81 took place in the conditions of a Soviet-dominated ECE. For its part, the Soviet Union was determined to restore the “socialist order” in any “fraternal” country where actions from below or from above threatened the very existence of the system, and this was made clear by the military interventions in Hungary (November 1956) and Czechoslovakia (August 1968).

The crisis of August 1980 was different from the previous ones in the sense that the working-class protest in Gdańsk did not turn violent. The non-violent occupation and round-the-clock strike, which benefited from the support of prominent dissident intellectuals, forced the regime to negotiate with the strikers and eventually to permit the establishment of Solidarity. Over the period August 1980–December 1981, Solidarity’s strategy of “self-limitation” envisaged a reformation of the system and not a regime change. The sole effective weapon of the new independent trade union was the general strike, but this proved to be ineffective in the face of a swift and determined action by the communists in uniform. The coming to the fore of the “military party” under General Wojciech Jaruzelski and the imposition of Martial Law in December 1981 showed that the PUWP was able to engage in large-scale domestic military operations, benefiting from the backing of the Soviet Union. Under Jaruzelski, political power was concentrated in the hands of the supreme leader and thus splits at the top of the party were avoided.

As already pointed out, the international context changed fundamentally after Gorbachev became the new Soviet leader in 1985. The renunciation of the Brezhnev Doctrine significantly reduced the margin of maneuver of the “military party” in power in Warsaw. The reformist course imposed by Gorbachev left the leaders of the “fraternal” regimes in ECE to their own devices and

in the case of Poland the “Vatican factor” acted in support of Solidarity. Domestic evolutions sparked a new wave of dissatisfaction with the regime in 1988. The economic performance of the regime was poor and societal unrest was growing, as shown by the wave of strikes in the spring and summer of 1988. Moreover, the strategy of administrative coercion introduced under the rule of Jaruzelski made ideology void of any mobilizing power. In this context, the power elite in Poland opted for a political transformation centered on path departure. Based most probably on the experience of his previous successful preemptive action of December 1981, General Jaruzelski took the decision to open talks with Solidarity in January 1989. In this way he hoped to control the transition process and ensure the political survival of the ruling party. Such a decision was eased by the change of leadership style after December 1981, which enabled the supreme leader of the PUWP to impose his decision to open talks with Solidarity on the party. Equally important, Solidarity’s strategy of self-restraint and its ability to negotiate and seek a compromise in a hostile political environment permitted the negotiations to finalize and the elections of June 1989 to take place. The “negotiated revolution” in Poland pushed the snowball of political changes in ECE downhill.

The Sequence of Events

The model presented above helps to explain the demise of the communist regimes in six countries with different cultural-historical and socio-economic backgrounds and characterized by distinct political cultures. As noted above, the transnational aspect and the issue of interdependence among the Soviet bloc countries are essential in explaining the 1989 revolutions. Consequently, this work introduces the *1989 sequence of collapse* of communist dictatorships in ECE, as follows: Poland – Hungary –

East Germany – Czechoslovakia – Bulgaria – Romania. The scholarly literature on path dependence identifies two dominant types of sequences, namely: self-reinforcing sequences and reactive sequences. According to James Mahoney, *self-reinforcing sequences* refer to “the formation and long-term reproduction of a given institutional pattern,” while *reactive sequences* refer to “chains of temporally ordered and causally connected events.”⁴⁷

This author contends that the 1989 sequence of collapse of communist dictatorships in ECE can be regarded as a *reactive sequence*, in which each event in the sequence represented a reaction to previous events and a cause of subsequent events. Thus, an initial event, namely the roundtable talks in Poland, set in motion a chain of closely linked reactions and counter-reactions which ultimately provoked the breakdown of the communist regimes in the six countries under discussion. The “breakpoint,” that is, the first event in the sequence, was the initiation by the Jaruzelski regime of talks with Solidarity in early 1989. At the same time, this event can be explained in terms of “recent path dependence.” As Scott E. Page argues: “The notion of recent path dependence runs counter to common conceptions of path dependence which emphasize early decisions.... A process is recent path-dependent if the outcome in any subsequent period depends only upon the outcomes and opportunities in the recent past.”⁴⁸ As discussed in Chapter Two, both political actors which engaged in the Polish Roundtable Talks of 1989 were born of the political crisis of 1980–81. In December 1981, General Jaruzelski conducted a successful preemptive action, which put a stop to Solidarity’s “self-limiting revolution” and prevented a possible Soviet intervention. In early 1989, the same General Jaruzelski decided to engage in a second preemptive action meant to ensure the political survival of the ruling elite. Not only that this second action failed, but it evolved into a “negotiated revolution” that concluded the “self-limiting revolution” which Solidarity had initiated in August 1980.

Furthermore, one can establish the following sequence of collapse of three types of communist dictatorships during the revolutionary year 1989: “national-accommodative” (Poland and Hungary) – “welfare” (East Germany and Czechoslovakia) – modernizing-nationalizing (Bulgaria and Romania). The revolutionary changes of 1989 originated in the camp of “national-accommodative” dictatorships. In Poland and Hungary, both incumbents and opposition forces observed the principle of roundtable talks and thus in these two countries the 1989 revolutions were negotiated. The Polish Roundtable Agreement, concluded on 5 April 1989, contributed to the inception of the “negotiated revolution” in Hungary. As András Bozóki notes: “The political use of the phrase ‘Roundtable’ entered the vocabulary of the Hungarian opposition after the Polish Roundtable Talks.”⁴⁹ The Hungarian democratic opposition applied the Polish model to their country and thus completed the first phase – the “negotiated” one – of the 1989 revolutions.

The revolutionary changes ensued non-violently in East Germany and Czechoslovakia. One should note that the “welfare dictatorships” in these two countries were brought down by non-negotiated revolutions which emerged under the influence of the political transformations in Poland and Hungary. Geographic proximity played a role in this respect. The opening of the Hungarian border with Austria prompted a mass exodus of East German citizens, who crossed the Hungarian border into Austria and continued their journey to West Germany. This exodus led to an increased mobilization of those GDR citizens who did not want to leave their country but were in favor of democratic reforms at home. Unprecedented mobilization by the GDR population led in the end to the opening of the Berlin Wall. The fall of the Berlin Wall had a tremendous influence on the rest of the communist regimes still in power in ECE. In Czechoslovakia, protests from below multiplied during the month of November

1989 and eventually provoked the fall of the regime. At the time, Václav Havel emphasized that the political transformations in neighboring countries influenced significantly the sparking of the “velvet revolution” in Czechoslovakia: “Without the changes in the Soviet Union, Poland, Hungary, and the German Democratic Republic, what has happened in our country could scarcely have happened. In any event, it would not have followed such a peaceful course.”⁵⁰

The modernizing-nationalizing dictatorships in Bulgaria and Romania were the last in a row to collapse. Further explanation is required with regard to the place occupied by Bulgaria within the 1989 sequence of collapse. One might ask why Bulgaria is placed after Czechoslovakia in the aforementioned sequence of collapse since on 10 November 1989 the supreme leader of the Bulgarian communists, Zhivkov, was forced to resign and was replaced by the sitting minister of foreign affairs, Petar Mladenov. This author acknowledges that a majority of the Bulgarians perceive 10 November as the date of the regime change in their country. The political transformations in Bulgaria, however, gained momentum after the establishment of the Union of Democratic Forces (UDF), which came into being on 7 December 1989 as an alliance of some thirteen opposition groups and emerging political parties. Under the leadership of the former dissident philosopher Zhelyu Zhelev, this political force played a major role in mobilizing public support against the communist party in power and putting an end to one-party rule.⁵¹ In Romania, witness accounts from the period show that the breakdown of communist regimes from Poland and Hungary to the neighboring Bulgaria created a special state of mind among Romania’s population and contributed to the emergence of the protests in Timișoara, which sparked the Romanian revolution. Unfortunately, the monolithism of the party elite and its policy of relative independence from Moscow made impossible a non-violent exit from communism in that country.

The 1989 sequence of collapse of the communist dictatorships in ECE came into being due to the particular way in which regime and society reacted, in each of the six cases analyzed in this book, to the structural and conjunctural factors discussed above. The power elites and social actors in each of the six countries responded in particular ways, determined by the respective regime and community political cultures, to the problem of economic failure and to the phenomenon of ideological decay, as well as to the external or internal conjunctural factors. These particular responses to structural and conjunctural factors determined the place each of the six countries eventually occupied in the 1989 sequence of collapse. At the same time, the solutions for solving the crisis of state socialism conceived by power elites and social actors in each particular context determined the occurrence of negotiated or non-negotiated revolutions.

The Nature of Events

The nature of the 1989 revolutions in ECE, i.e., negotiated or non-negotiated, violent or non-violent, was primarily determined by two important aspects of regime and community political cultures respectively: (1) the monolithism of the power elite and the problem of its subordination to, or emancipation from, the Soviet Union; and (2) the existence of political alternatives to the ruling power within society. Where the power elite was compelled to offer a tacit deal to the society at large due to an intricate interplay between path dependence, agency and contingency, political bargaining became a major element of both regime and community political cultures. Looking back at the moment of the communist takeovers, one can establish a relationship between the degree of destruction suffered by the countries under analysis during World War II and the level of violence applied by the

Stalinist elite during the “revolution from above” carried out in the respective countries. A comparative study of the capital losses suffered by a series of countries in ECE during the war, relative to their national incomes in 1938 provides the following figures: Poland – 350 percent; Yugoslavia – 274 percent; Hungary – 194 percent; Czechoslovakia – 115 percent; Bulgaria – 33 percent; and Romania – 29 percent.⁵²

Poland and Hungary, which initiated the 1989 sequence of collapse, were the countries that had suffered the most, alongside former Yugoslavia, during World War II. In these two countries, the power elite proved to be less monolithic and splits at the top did take place. In Poland, splits at the top of the PUWP occurred in 1956, 1970 and 1981. The birth of Solidarity was also due to the substantial amount of factionalism within the power elite in Warsaw. True, the amount of factionalism decreased sharply after the coming to power of the “military party” headed by Jaruzelski, which nonetheless proved flexible enough to decide in 1989 for a path departure scenario, i.e., a gradual adaptation to the new context generated by the Soviet renunciation of the Brezhnev Doctrine. In Hungary, the divergent political ideas of the First Secretary Mátyás Rákosi and Prime Minister Imre Nagy during the period July 1953–April 1955 prepared the ground for the major split that occurred at power elite level in the autumn of 1956 and favored the development of a revolutionary situation. A single event of paramount importance, the revolution of October–November 1956, contributed decisively to the development of set of attitudinal and behavioral patterns at both regime and community levels, and in the long-term influenced significantly the inception, unfolding and outcome of the Hungarian “negotiated revolution” of 1989. The 1956 revolution represented a deeply traumatic experience, which prompted the adoption of an evolutionary political strategy, aimed at avoiding by all means the outbreak of similar events. In 1989, after the

Polish power elite had initiated the roundtable talks that marked the “strategic compromise” between regime and opposition, neighboring Hungary experienced a similar “negotiated revolution” based on the same principle. The Hungarian communist regime came down non-violently also because of the readiness of an “enlightened” faction of the ruling elite to open negotiations with the democratic opposition with a view to a transition to a new political order.

In East Germany, the task of economic recovery was not only huge due to the high level of war destruction, but was also complicated further because of the Soviet dismantling of production facilities. For its part, Czechoslovakia ranked only the fourth in terms of capital losses relative to its 1938 national income, as shown by the figures mentioned above. Therefore, when the communist takeovers occurred, a significant discrepancy existed between the two countries in terms of initial economic conditions. In spite of such discrepancy, one can note a striking similarity between East Germany and Czechoslovakia in terms of cohesion of the power elite and its subservience to the Soviet Union. In both countries, the ruling elites displayed a high degree of unity and when more or less significant splits at the top nevertheless occurred, emancipation from the Soviet Union never became an issue. The Stalinist power elites in Bulgaria and Romania, which did not face the enormous task of postwar reconstruction, proceeded to their “revolutions from above” by making extensive use of random terror. However, the difference between the two communist dictatorships was that the Romanian communists gradually emancipated themselves from Moscow after 1956, while the Bulgarian communists did not. Both countries were, however, the last in a row to exit from communism during the revolutionary year 1989.

One can observe that in those countries where the power elites proved to be monolithic, either because of a higher degree of

institutionalization of the ruling communist party (as in East Germany and Czechoslovakia) or because of the establishment of a modernizing-nationalizing dictatorship (Bulgaria and Romania), the regime change was non-negotiated and occurred only in the favorable context determined by the “negotiated revolutions” in Poland in Hungary. The non-negotiated revolutions in East Germany, Czechoslovakia and Bulgaria were also non-violent because the power elites decided, under enormous popular pressure, for the path departure scenario. In Romania, the communist power elite which had emancipated itself from the Soviet Union decided for path stabilization and thus for a marginal adaptation to the new international context. As a consequence, the repressive apparatus was given the order to fire at the anti-regime protesters and provoked a bloodbath in 1989. In short, the power elites which remained more subservient to the Soviet Union gave up power more easily when left to their own devices than the allegedly independent Romanian elite.

Another major factor that determined the nature of each revolution of 1989 was related to the development of political alternatives to communist power within the respective societies. Both Poland and Hungary went through revolutionary experiences under communist rule. In Poland, the birth of Solidarity was described by Jadwiga Staniskis as a “self-limiting revolution.” The political actors that negotiated the Polish regime change of 1989 emerged from the confrontation between the PUWP-regime and Solidarity during the interval August 1980–December 1981. The state-sponsored terror unleashed against Solidarity after December 1981 weakened but did not destroy the independent trade union, which remained a redoubtable opposition force. For its part, Hungary experienced a genuine revolution during the period 23 October–4 November 1956. In spite of its bloody suppression by the Soviet troops, the revolutionary experience of 1956 marked the relations between the communist regime and society in

Hungary until 1989. The communist regimes in ECE, however, did not collapse because of dissident actions or working-class protests. As Detlef Pollack and Jan Wielgohs observe: "It is widely uncontroversial in the academic literature that dissidence, opposition, and even the mass protests in the fall of 1989 were not the decisive causes for the collapse of the system."⁵³ Furthermore, as Linz and Stepan note, in comparison with opposition parties in Spain, Uruguay and Chile, which articulated alternative political programs before the regime change, the opposition groups in Central Europe did not devise alternative political programs before 1989.⁵⁴ At the same time, the dissident networks which developed in Poland and Hungary prior to the revolutionary year 1989 did contribute to the negotiated nature of the regime change due to the fact that the structured opposition became a major political actor during the roundtable talks in both cases. In peasant societies that were practically modernized by the communist regimes, such as Romania and Bulgaria, opposition to communist rule developed slowly. Clientelism and cooptation functioned quite well until the economic crisis made large segments of the population think in terms of biological survival. Dissident networks did not appear and cross-class alliances did not emerge in such societies. Consequently, communist successor parties emerged as the most powerful contenders for power in post-communism both in Bulgaria and Romania.

All the above illustrates that two fundamental features of regime political culture practically determined the nature of the 1989 revolution in each of the six countries under discussion: (1) the cohesion of the power elite; and (2) the degree of emancipation of the respective elite from the Soviet Union. The communist regimes which experienced early, though failed, attempts at emancipating themselves from Moscow by establishing a national path to socialism and were confronted with revolutionary situations prior to 1989 (Solidarity's "self-limiting revolution" of 1980–81

or the Hungarian Revolution of 1956), adopted a negotiated solution in 1989. Those communist regimes whose power elites proved to be monolithic, but had not emancipated themselves from Moscow, went through non-negotiated but non-violent revolutions in 1989. In the Bulgarian case, a palace coup preceded the 1989 revolution. Where the power elite was monolithic, but had emancipated itself from Moscow, the revolution was not only non-negotiated, but also violent. In the Romanian case, the communist elite felt confident enough to order the repression apparatus to shoot to kill and had its orders obeyed in the first stage of the revolution.

To conclude, there were three configurations linking the monolithism of the power elite with the degree of structuring of societal opposition and the level of emancipation from Moscow that emerged in 1989 and determined the nature of the respective revolutions, as follows: (1) factionalism of the power elite, which provoked major splits at the top of the communist hierarchy, in the conditions of a previous revolutionary experience ("self-limiting" or genuine) led to "negotiated revolutions" (Poland and Hungary); (2) monolithism of the power elite and a more or less structured societal opposition, in the conditions of a lack of emancipation from Moscow led to non-negotiated non-violent revolutions, i.e., regime "implosion" or palace coup followed by unprecedented popular mobilization in support of the opposition (East Germany and Czechoslovakia; Bulgaria); and (3) monolithism of the power elite and a poorly structured societal opposition, in the conditions of the emancipation of the power elite from Moscow, led to a non-negotiated and violent revolution (Romania). Throughout the following chapters, the explanatory model presented above is consistently applied to each of the six countries under discussion following the 1989 sequence of collapse, i.e., Poland – Hungary – East Germany – Czechoslovakia – Bulgaria – Romania.

CHAPTER TWO

Poland

The Polish “negotiated revolution” inaugurated the revolutionary year 1989. One might argue that it was not a complete surprise that the breakdown of communist rule in ECE commenced in Poland. After all, from 1956 onwards the communist regime in Poland was challenged by revolts from below almost every ten years. *Solidarność* (Solidarity), the first independent trade union in a communist country, was born in Poland in 1980 and soon became an alternative society, only to be brutally suppressed one year after, with the imposition of Martial Law by domestic communists in military uniform. In 1989, the Polish communist elite decided to initiate negotiations with the revived Solidarity and thus opened the way for the termination of the single-party system in Poland, as well as for the exit from communism of another five countries in ECE. In this respect, Kołakowski perceptively observes: “One of the things most derided and mocked by twentieth-century Polish writers and thinkers was the idea of Polish messianism; emerging in poetry and philosophy after the

Notes for this chapter begin on page 358.

defeat of the 1830 anti-Russian uprising, it depicted Poland as the ‘Christ of nations,’ whose suffering and crucifixion would redeem mankind.” The same author further concedes though: “A Messiah? Perhaps. This is not to say that the history of Poland, after or before the war, was an uninterrupted pageant of virtue and bravery; far from it. Still, its pioneering role in the slow decomposition of Sovietism cannot be denied.”¹ Considering that the 1989 regime changes were initiated in Poland, this chapter addresses two of the most difficult questions one is compelled to answer when aiming at a causal explanation for the breakdown of communist rule in ECE: “Why did it occur in 1989?” and “Why did it commence in Poland?” In order to answer these questions and provide a plausible explanation of the initiation of the 1989 sequence of collapse of state socialism in ECE, the explanatory model presented in Chapter One is applied below to the Polish case. Accordingly, the analysis concentrates on the particular aggregation of structural, conjunctural and nation-specific factors in the case of communist Poland.

Structural Factors

Economic Failure

The development of a state-socialist economy in Poland was inaugurated by two central plans: a Three-Year Plan 1947–49 and a Six-Year Plan 1950–55.² The Six-Year Plan was supposed to represent a major breakthrough with regard to the “socialist transformation” of the economy.³ During the period 1950–55, in accordance with the general developmental pattern imposed on Sovietized Europe, the Polish central planners focused on the sustained development of heavy industry. However, the accelerated development of industry could only be achieved through the

neglect of agriculture and the consumer goods sector.⁴ In Poland, just as in the other communist dictatorships in ECE, the fundamental decision regarding the separation of national income into accumulation and consumption was primarily political. Consequently, the producer goods sector received constant support while the consumer goods sector was largely disregarded.⁵ Thus, economic Stalinism led to the worsening of living conditions towards the mid-1950s. Some data will serve to illustrate this point. Food rationing was introduced in 1951 and price increases followed in 1953. In 1955, real earnings were 39 percent below the 1949 figures.⁶ In this context, a major outburst of social unrest occurred in June 1956 in the city of Poznań.

The 1956 working-class revolt triggered what is generally known as the Polish October. Władysław Gomułka, who had been the head of the party during the period 1944–48, was reelected as first secretary of the Polish United Workers Party (PUWP). Gomułka’s coming to power resulted only in a temporary period of political and economic relaxation.⁷ Beginning in the late 1950s, the Stalinist developmental pattern was resuscitated, simultaneously with a gradual withdrawal of the freedoms introduced by the Polish October. Thus, from October 1958 onwards the rate of accumulation was raised again and this trend was maintained for the final two years of the First Five-Year Plan (FYP) 1956–60, as well as for the entire Second FYP 1961–65.⁸ In spite of sustained investments, Polish heavy industry products proved to be hard to sell on Western markets.⁹ Thus, the Polish leadership referred increasingly towards the late 1960s to the need to shift “from quantity to quality” in industrial production.¹⁰

In the last two years of the Third FYP 1966–70, the Polish power elite attempted to restructure industry in order to solve domestic economic problems without borrowing from the West. The central planners envisaged among other things a reduction of

budgetary costs together with the introduction of a policy of “selective and intensive development” aimed at supporting only a number of key industrial sectors.¹¹ It is worth noting that shipbuilding and aircraft manufacturing were not among the industrial sectors chosen for such selective development.¹² Instead of introducing real reforms, the regime launched a campaign for the efficient use of work time. The only palpable result of the campaign was the increase of work norms and the exclusion of wage increases and bonuses. Eventually, the Gomułka regime announced significant price increases for foodstuffs, a decision which triggered the second major outburst of social discontent in the history of communist Poland, when violent working-class protests broke out at the shipyards on the Polish Baltic Coast on 14 December 1970. The authorities repressed the strikers violently. As a direct consequence of the working-class unrest in the Baltic Coast shipyards, on 20 December 1970, during a CC meeting, Gomułka was demoted and replaced by Edward Gierek.

In February 1971, the new party leader decided to withdraw the price increases.¹³ During the Fourth FYP 1971–75, the Gierek regime adopted a different pattern of economic development aimed at stimulating exports and relying extensively on foreign credits.¹⁴ Gierek saw in an increased rate of consumption the best solution to avoid social protest and downright contestation of the regime. By 1975, investments in the sector of consumer goods exceeded investments in the producer goods sector. A major side-effect of such a policy was a growing trade deficit. Large-scale investments, based on Western credits and licenses, were intended to accelerate the production of competitive Polish products that could sell better on the hard-currency markets.¹⁵ Regarding the results of this policy, Michael D. Kennedy aptly notes: “By 1983, the dream of making Poland the second Japan of the world economy was a popular joke, but in the first half of the 1970s a

glorious economic revival seemed quite possible.”¹⁶ In short, the large-scale investments policy proved to be a failure. According to George Kolankiewicz and Paul G. Lewis, in the late 1970s “the Poles were effectively eating their credit ... or using it to cover mounting interest repayments.”¹⁷

The economic boom of the early 1970s generated an imbalance between the steady increase in the purchasing power of the population and the modest performance of the consumer goods sector. To address the problem directly would have meant to introduce a much needed price reform. However, the authorities feared the scenario: raise in food prices – violent protests from below – bloody repression – withdrawal of price increases, which had been initiated in June 1956 and had been repeated in December 1970. The Gierek regime delayed a decision on price increases for as long as possible. The price reform legislation was eventually presented to the Polish Parliament on 24 June 1976.¹⁸ The decision to introduce price increases opened a new chapter in the relations between regime and society in communist Poland; from a chronological point of view, this new chapter coincided with the Fifth FYP 1976–80. The planned price increases of June 1976 triggered a new wave of protests from below. The most resolute protests were carried out on 25 June 1976 by workers from the Ursus Tractor Factory (*Zakłady Mechaniczne Ursus*) – located in the vicinity of the capital city Warsaw – and the General Walter Metal Factory (*Zakłady Metalowe Predom-Łucznik im. Gen. Waltera*) located in Radom. The protests were put down brutally.¹⁹ After the violent repression of the 1976 outbursts of working-class unrest, one could nonetheless witness an unprecedented mobilization of the opposition forces within Polish society. In this respect, the year 1976 represented a watershed indeed: that year, for the first time in postwar history of Poland, a cross-class alliance between workers and dissident intellectuals came into being

through the creation of the Committee for the Defense of Workers (*Komitet Obrony Robotników*–KOR).²⁰

The long-term implications of this event are discussed in the frame of the nation-specific factors. With regard to the structural factors, one must take into account that during the Fifth FYP 1976–80 Poland's economic growth rate declined continuously. According to a World Bank study, during the period 1970–75 the rate of growth in Gross National Product (GNP) was 10.7 percent, while over the period 1975–80 the rate of growth in GNP declined to only 0.9 percent.²¹ True, Poland experienced an economic boom during the Fourth FYP 1971–75. However, as Kolankiewicz and Lewis argue, the price to be paid for it was high and consisted in “inflationary pressures, monopolistic gigantism, foreign trade ‘errors’ and excessive rates of investment.” The same authors further emphasize a troublesome aspect: production based on the high number of licenses for technology purchased from the West proved to be less successful than anticipated. Thus, out of the 447 licenses for technology and know-how purchased by the regime, only 342 came into operation and 166 of these did not achieve the planned production targets.²²

Although reluctant to raise prices in order to cut consumption, the Gierek regime was forced to look in this direction when confronted with growing economic problems. At the Eighth Congress of the PUWP, held in February 1980, the regime launched a campaign for “austerity and unity” in order to prepare the population to accept a decline in the standard of living.²³ On 1 July 1980, the authorities announced a new pricing system for meat. In reaction, workers throughout Poland went on strike. As is well known, these protests concluded with the formal agreement signed in Gdańsk which brought about the birth of Solidarity, the first independent trade union established under communist rule. Its creation opened a period of high hopes on the part of the

population and increased confusion at the party level. This ended in December 1981, when a military coup, carried out by the first secretary of the PUWP, General Wojciech Jaruzelski, sought to restore the control of the party over society.

Throughout the Sixth FYP 1981–85, the Jaruzelski regime had to face, apart from the unprecedented political problems, the economic legacy of the Gierek years. In this respect, Kamiński notes: “The policies pursued in the 1970s could neither close a gap between domestic expenditure and income, filled by the inflow of resources from abroad, nor improve export performance in Western markets.”²⁴ Different recipes, including some rather uninspired measures aimed at institutional reshuffling, were applied more or less consistently in order to stop the economic decline. It is worth mentioning that real income shrank by approximately 27 percent in 1982, and subsequently grew by 7 percent in 1985 and by a mere 2 percent in 1986. Although the communist regime was always reluctant to raise the prices of consumer goods and services, the structural economic imbalance forced it to apply such a measure during the Seventh FYP 1986–90. Thus, in September 1988 the prices of consumer goods and services rose by 63.8 percent in comparison with September 1987.²⁵ By 1988, it had become clear that the regime had no solutions for the serious economic problems the country was facing. Furthermore, throughout the year 1988 social discontent manifested itself via two waves of strikes. Eventually, in late 1988 the communist power elite made a surprising decision that dramatically changed the course of events throughout ECE. In early 1989, the Jaruzelski regime opened discussions regarding the legalization of Solidarity and thus initiated the “negotiated revolution” in Poland.

A detailed analysis of the economic problems faced by the Polish state-socialist economy would go far beyond the scope of this

section. Nevertheless, it is important to stress the close relationship between politics, economy and social protest in the Polish case. More precisely, one should examine closely what Kamiński terms “pulsations in economy and politics.” He argues that the period 1949–88 can be divided in accordance with the criterion of the net investment rate into four investment cycles: 1949–57; 1958–71; 1972–82; and 1983–88.²⁶ If one examines these cycles, one finds that all of them ended with a political crisis. After the first two cycles, social unrest and violent confrontations between the population and the authorities occurred, and thus a change in leadership followed shortly. While the first cycle finished with a crisis that led to the return of Gomułka to power (the Polish October of 1956), the second cycle provoked the fall of Gomułka and the coming to power of Gierek (December 1970).

The next two cycles ended non-violently through a negotiated solution. The compromise reached in 1980 represented a temporary victory of Solidarity’s “self-limiting revolution,” which did not result in a change of system and therefore could not solve the economic and political problems posed by the logic of the party-state.²⁷ The fourth cycle also ended peacefully, but this time the negotiated solution went beyond the confines of a “self-limiting revolution.” Through the legalization of Solidarity and its acceptance as a political competitor, it evolved into a “negotiated revolution.” Throughout the communist period in Poland, recurrent outbursts of social discontent warned the party against its mistaken economic policies. Therefore, one might conclude that the poor economic performance of the system played a significant role in the final demise of Polish communism. However, a comprehensive explanation of the inception of the 1989 sequence of collapse in Poland cannot rely entirely on the influence of economic factors. The next section addresses the issue of the ideology factor.

Ideological Decay

In the case of Poland, the official Marxist-Leninist ideology proved to be an instrument of low efficiency in mobilizing the party rank and file and the masses alike. Poland represented a particular case among the Sovietized countries in ECE in the sense that stateness represented a fundamental issue for both the democratic political forces and the “local” communists headed by Gomułka.²⁸ As Krystyna Kersten observes, at the end of World War II, the democratic political forces in Poland had to face the thorny issue of reaching an agreement with the communists in order to ensure the existence of the Polish nation: “The fundamental issue concerned the extent of the compromise with the reality of Soviet occupation, and with the order that the Polish communists were establishing, protected by the international balance of power.”²⁹

At the same time, the tragic realities of a country devastated by war and foreign occupation shaped the more “accommodative” vision of what Gomułka called the “Polish road to socialism,” which the “local” communists shared. Such an idea was born from both the wartime experience of the “local” communists and the situation of Poland at the end of the war. The country suffered enormous destruction during World War II and the communists in power had to face the huge task of reconstruction. Not least important was the problem of integrating the newly acquired territories in the West. In this respect, Brus noted: “From personal experience (as a junior member of the editorial board of the party’s theoretical journal *Nowe Drogi* since the beginning of 1947) I recall numerous instances when every opportunity was being used by the top leaders to stick to a less imitative and violent, to a more thoughtful and indigenous way of building socialism in Poland.”³⁰

The rejection of the idea of a “Polish road to socialism” and the removal of Gomułka from the post of secretary general of the party at the plenum of August–September 1948 marked the

renunciation of the “practical ideology” of the “local” communists, which was consistent with the social and political reality of Poland at the end of World War II. As Jowitt notes: “A ‘practical ideology’ is not synonymous with a pragmatic orientation. Rather, it refers to a set of action-oriented beliefs that are defined in terms which in significant respects reflect and are congruent with a given social reality and political situation.”³¹ The ousting of Gomułka announced the inauguration of the Stalinist epoch and thus an unyielding, formal and dogmatic commitment to the Soviet-inspired Marxism-Leninism. However, the Stalinist “revolution from above,” which is generally identified with the Bierut era, was less repressive at both party and societal levels. Poland did not experience show trials meant to tame the party apparatus. Gomułka for instance, was spared the fate of a László Rajk in Hungary or a Rudolf Slánský in Czechoslovakia. Moreover, collectivization of agriculture was never accomplished.³²

Khrushchev’s condemnation of Stalin’s personality cult and crimes against the party apparatus at a closed session of the Twentieth Congress of the CPSU on the night of 24–25 February 1956 represented a major ideological shock for the communist leaderships in ECE.³³ In this respect, Kołakowski notes: “The Stalinist regime could not exist without the cement of ideology to legitimize party rule, and the party apparatus at this time was sensitive to ideological shocks.... De-Stalinization proved to be a virus from which communism never recovered.”³⁴ In the Polish case, a certain degree of ideological consistency was reached in October 1956 when Gomułka was reinstated as party leader in spite of the displeasure of, and even military threats coming from, the Soviet Union.³⁵ Arguably, the Polish October of 1956 offered an unexpected ideological support for the regime. Apart from its commitment to Marxism-Leninism, the Gomułka regime also possessed a diffuse “practical ideology,” which may be termed as Polish national-communism. As Andrzej Korbonski observes: “In

October 1956, Gomułka, perceived as a victim of Stalinism and as a standard bearer of Polish independence, as well as enjoying the support of the Church, was in an excellent position to make communism legitimate.”³⁶ As already noted, a period of economic and political relaxation followed the Polish October of 1956. The regime allowed greater freedom of expression, which permitted Marxist revisionism to gain ground and undermine the official ideology from within.³⁷ At the same time, the regime offered a tacit deal to the working class. As part of this deal, it strove to maintain an acceptable standard of living and avoid any sudden rise of food prices.

Two events in the late 1960s marked the “dying of the faith” in Gomułka’s national-communism and thus the dissolution of the official ideology in Poland: the so-called “anti-Zionist” campaign of March 1968 and the above-mentioned bloody suppression of the working-class food protests on the Polish Baltic Coast in December 1970. The “anti-Zionist” campaign, which was harbingered by the PUWP reaction to the Six-Day Arab-Israeli War of June 1967, reached its peak in March 1968 and affected both the party and the Polish intelligentsia.³⁸ According to Dariusz Stola, the campaign had three main objectives: (1) to suppress the wave of student unrest and intellectual dissent; (2) to avoid the spread of protests from university and intellectual milieus to other strata of the Polish society, especially to working-class environments; and (3) to consolidate Gomułka’s power and marginalize his opponents in the Politburo.³⁹ The same author provides a perceptive assessment of the consequences of the 1968 chauvinistic campaign:

A costly consequence of the 1968 campaign,... was a profound disillusionment with the regime among those segments of the Polish intelligentsia who had sympathized with its socialist slogans. For many people who had dreamed of a “socialism

with human face,” the events of 1968 – in Poland and in Czechoslovakia – were the final blow to such beliefs and left no doubts that the regime’s officially declared ideology was dead.⁴⁰

The decision to raise the prices of consumer goods just before Christmas 1970 was met with profound discontent among Polish workers. The protests turned violent in the shipbuilding centers on the Baltic Coast, in Gdańsk, Gdynia and Szczecin. Faced with the violent reaction of coastal workers, the regime responded with deadly force, following the pattern established during the Poznań revolt of June 1956. In the aftermath of the chauvinistic campaign of March 1968 and the bloody suppression of the working-class revolt of December 1970 the official ideology lost its mobilizing power.

Providing for the population remained the only powerful legitimation tool in the hands of the party. Upon his coming to power after Gomulka’s ousting, Gierek adopted a strategy of economic development that bore some fruit up to the mid-1970s, but which was far from being viable in the long term. In June 1976, a long-delayed decision to raise the prices of consumer goods provoked a new wave of protests by the working class. As noted, the protests were also suppressed rapidly, but their importance lies in the creation of the KOR, the organization which laid the foundations of the cross-class alliance and thus paved the way for the birth of Solidarity. Towards the late 1970s, the demand for consumer goods remained high and could not be met, and thus the regime was compelled to introduce price increases for basic foodstuffs in July 1980. When the regime announced such news, the coastal workers conducted another wave of open protest. However, the strike which broke out at the Lenin Shipyard in Gdańsk proved to be different from the previous strikes, which had ended in violence and bloodshed. Instead of marching into the town, the workers engaged in a non-violent occupation strike and asked for the right to establish an independent trade union.

Reluctantly, the regime opened negotiations with the workers and signed the Gdańsk Agreement on 31 August 1980. By signing this agreement, the regime accepted the establishment of Solidarity as an independent trade union.

During the period August 1980–December 1981, ideological decay became evident against the backdrop of the political changes that signaled the coming to power of the “party-soldiers” or the “communists in military uniform.” In February 1981, General Wojciech Jaruzelski was appointed prime minister and a few months later, in October 1981, he took over the post of first secretary of the PUWP as well. Such a political change was unprecedented: for the first time in the history of the PUWP, a “communist in uniform” became the supreme leader of the party. Finally, on 13 December 1981 General Jaruzelski carried out the military coup that put an end to the political changes inaugurated through the Gdańsk Agreement. The imposition of Martial Law represents perhaps the most striking proof of the final demise of ideology in communist Poland. The Jaruzelski regime relied increasingly on bureaucratic coercion instead of selective terror. According to Jadwiga Staniszkis, during this period the exercise of power was reminiscent of “bureaucratic Stalinism, non-ideological and based on the state not the party.” Kołakowski also observes that Polish communism under Jaruzelski represented a curiosity, i.e., “a communism without ideology,” a condition that contributed to its demise in 1989.⁴¹

Conjunctural Factors

Contingency played a significant role in the final demise of the communist dictatorships in ECE. As already noted, the present analysis concentrates on two kinds of conjunctural factors, i.e., external and internal. Given the nature of the power relations

between the Soviet Union and its European satellites, it is obvious that one external factor – which might be called the “Kremlin factor” – always influenced the decisions made by the power elites in Sovietized Europe throughout the period 1945–89. Until the mid-1980s, the “Kremlin factor” was synonymous with the involvement of Moscow in the domestic affairs of the “fraternal” countries in ECE, as was the case in Hungary in 1956 or in Czechoslovakia in 1968. Once Gorbachev came to power and engaged in a bold program of reforms, the “Kremlin factor” evolved into the “Gorbachev factor” and became synonymous with restructuring and openness. At the same time, unexpected events of historic significance or crucial decisions made by the Western powers contributed considerably to the demise of communist dictatorships in ECE. In Poland, more than in the other countries that experienced a regime change in 1989, the “Gorbachev factor” represented the most influential external conjunctural factor. Besides, one should mention the “Vatican factor,” which influenced significantly the structuring of the anti-communist opposition in communist Poland. The “Reagan factor,” i.e., the determination of the American President Ronald Reagan to establish a high-tech spatial weapon system, forced the Soviet Union to invest more in weaponry and thus weakened it economically, influencing indirectly the breakdown of the communist regimes in Sovietized Europe.

Obviously, an important external conjunctural factor, which contributed decisively to the fall of communist dictatorships in Hungary, East Germany, Czechoslovakia, Bulgaria and Romania, i.e., the “snowballing effect,” was conspicuously absent in the Polish case for the very simple reason that it originated in Poland. The Polish Roundtable Agreement concluded on 5 April 1989 initiated a regional “snowballing effect,” which lasted until 22 December 1989 when Romanian communism was brought down by a violent revolution. The fact that a very powerful factor,

the “snowballing effect,” was not present in the Polish case poses difficult problems of interpretation concerning the way the external conjunctural factors aggregated and contributed to the demise of the Jaruzelski regime.

The “Gorbachev factor” was crucial in the Polish case especially in terms of its influence on the power elite in Warsaw during the terminal phase of communist rule in 1988–89. In his book-length dialogue with Zdeněk Mlynář, Gorbachev confessed that after his coming to power he warned the leaders of the communist regimes in ECE that Moscow would renounce the doctrine of limited sovereignty: “Immediately after the funeral of my predecessor, Chernenko, I called a conference of political leaders of the Warsaw Pact countries and told them clearly that now we were actually going to do what we had for a long time been declaring: we would adhere strictly to the principle of equality and independence.” As Gorbachev further pointed out, that was a clear indication that Moscow would not interfere anymore in the internal affairs of a “fraternal” country, but his warning was not taken seriously: “This meant that we would not commit acts of intervention or interference in their internal affairs. My counterparts at that conference, as I came to understand later, did not take what I said seriously. But I did adhere to this principle and never departed from it.”⁴² After two Soviet military interventions, in Hungary (1956) and Czechoslovakia (1968), and a Soviet-backed military coup in Poland (1981), the change of political vision in the Kremlin meant that the ruling communist parties in ECE were left to their own devices. In this context, the power elite in Poland – made up primarily of communists in military uniform – sought an exit from the structural economic and moral crisis of state socialism by initiating a “preemptive action” aimed at conducting a “pacted transition” to a new political order by opening talks with the opposition.

As for the “Vatican factor,” it may be argued that the election of the Archbishop of Krakow, Karol Wojtyła, to the papal throne

on 16 October 1978 represented an event of great significance not only for Poland, but also for the entire Soviet bloc. According to Linz and Stepan, Catholicism was a major transnational actor which mobilized anti-regime resources in post-1978 Poland: “Sociologically and politically, the existence of a strong Roman Catholic Church in a totalitarian country is *always* a latent source of pluralism, precisely because it is a formal organization with a transnational base. The papacy can be a source of spiritual and material support for groups that want to resist monist absorption or extinction [original emphasis].”⁴³ In the case of communist Poland, the Roman Catholic Church under Pope John Paul II became an external conjunctural factor that contributed in many respects to the birth of Solidarity and, some ten years afterwards, to the initiation of the “negotiated revolution” in that country. As Michnik has aptly noted, Solidarity was able to combine the Catholic Church’s resistance to totalitarianism and its teachings on truth with a pluralistic vision of civil society.⁴⁴ To sum up, this author contends that of the two kinds of conjunctural factors, i.e., external and internal, the former were the most influential with regard to the timing and nature of the 1989 regime change in Poland. Of the external factors which contributed to the inception of the Polish “negotiated revolution,” the “Gorbachev” and “Vatican” factors proved to be indeed instrumental.

Nation-Specific Factors

Regime Political Culture

When contemplating the unprecedented scale of the changes initiated by the 1989 “negotiated revolution” in Poland, one might ask whether the Polish communists were unbelievably vulnerable or downright obtuse when they decided to engage in negotiations

with Solidarity and thus involuntarily pushed the “snowball” of changes downhill. Or was it about the initiation of a preemptive action meant to ensure the political survival of the communist elite into the new political order? The purpose of this section is to examine the key issues concerning the political culture of Polish communism, with a special emphasis on two aspects: the cohesion of the power elite and its previous experience in crisis management. From 1944 to 1989, the following officials headed the Polish Workers Party, and subsequently, the Polish United Workers Party: Władysław Gomułka, 1944–48; Bolesław Bierut, 1948–56; Edward Ochab (March–October 1956); Władysław Gomułka (second time), 1956–70; Edward Gierek, 1970–80; Stanisław Kania, 1980–81; and Wojciech Jaruzelski, 1981–89. As noted, the Polish ruling elite faced three major crises, i.e., October 1956, December 1970 and August 1980, leaving aside other crises of lesser impact on the relationship between the ruling communist party and society, such as those of March 1968 (the “anti-Zionist” campaign) and June 1976 (the working-class revolts of Ursus and Radom). Only in Poland did the communist party in power have such a large number of supreme leaders, which is also indicative of the numerous splits at the top of the PUWP as a consequence of social crises.

When examining the political culture of Polish communism, this author has followed the periodization proposed by Norman Davies, i.e.: communist takeover, 1944–48; Polish Stalinism, 1948–56; national-communism, 1956–80; interval of Solidarity, 1980–81; military dictatorship, 1981–83; and terminal illness, 1983–89.⁴⁵ The particular way in which the communist elite reacted to the working-class protests or dissident actions, as well as the impact those actions had on single-party rule and the policies subsequently adopted by the regime, were influenced by the level of cohesion of the respective elite. A monolithic party could engage more easily in repressive actions meant to silence societal protests

without making relevant concessions to the protesters. However, a party that was more likely to face a major split at the top during, or in the immediate aftermath of, a major upheaval was prone to reacting more favorably to social demands. This brings us to the issue of crisis management. When societal protests result in splits at the top and changes in leadership, the new leaders are more often than not inclined to adopt policies meant to reduce for a while the social tensions. Such periods are usually characterized by ideological relaxation and economic liberalization and during such intervals the nuclei of civil society flourish. At the same time, a major change of political vision occurred at the power elite level in early 1981. This consisted of: (1) a gradual concentration of power in the hands of General Jaruzelski, who was appointed as prime minister in February 1981 and became first secretary of the PUWP in October 1981; and (2) the coming to the fore of the nomenklatura in military uniform, which gradually occupied prominent positions in the party. Jaruzelski was the first high ranking army officer to hold the highest position in the party apparatus, and thus his appointment signaled a major break with party traditions. Therefore, two issues concerning the political culture of Polish communism, which also characterize two periods of its history during the years 1948–89, deserve further examination. One is the vision of politics of the “civilian party” in power (1948–81), while the other concerns the vision of politics of the “military party” in power (1981–89).

The first party of the Polish communists, the Communist Workers Party of Poland (*Komunistyczna Partia Robotnicza Polski*–KPRP) was formed on 16 December 1918, and changed its name in 1925 to the Communist Party of Poland–CPP (*Komunistyczna Partia Polski*–KPP), which was dissolved at the end of 1938 at the orders of the Comintern.⁴⁶ It appears that the Comintern decision was prompted by a constant feature of the political culture of the interwar Polish communist elite, i.e., its propensity for

factionalism. As Jan B. de Weydenthal puts it: “The KPP leaders had always displayed a remarkable and constant tendency to quarrelsome rifts, factional struggles, and ideological turmoil. In the era of Stalin-centered obedience and discipline, they were suspect either of preserving some traces of past deviations or even developing new ones in the present.”⁴⁷ The Soviet attitude towards Polish communists would change after the June 1941 German attack on the Soviet Union. Thus, the communists were reactivated in the German-occupied territories. The party was reestablished on 5 January 1942 under a third label, i.e., Polish Workers Party–PWP (*Polska Partia Robotnicza*–PPR).⁴⁸ In the aftermath of World War II, the Soviet strategy of dismantling the competing socialist or social-democratic parties was imposed on Poland as in the rest of Soviet-occupied ECE. Throughout the year 1947, the PWP intensified its actions aimed at forcing a merger with the Polish Socialist Party (*Polska Partia Socjalistyczna*–PPS), which was eventually sanctioned at a Unity Congress held on 15–21 December 1948. The new name of the party born of the fusion was the Polish United Workers Party–PUWP (*Polska Zjednoczona Partia Robotnicza*–PZPR) and so it remained until 1989.

The particular conditions in postwar Poland have to be considered when examining the vision of politics as well as the internal conflicts that led to rifts and changes in leadership. In September 1939, Poland was first attacked by Nazi Germany and subsequently by the Soviet Union. As a consequence, two centers of Polish communist activism developed, one in the German-occupied territory, the other in the Soviet Union. In contrast with the “Muscovites,” the “locals” who were active in the Polish territories under German occupation advocated a “Polish road to socialism.” During the period 1944–47, such a task seemed possible. However, after the crucial events of 1947 which harbingered the Cold War – the formulation of the Truman Doctrine and the launch of the Marshall Plan, as well as the

founding of the Cominform – it became clear that the Soviets would not allow an independent “Polish road.”

The “locals” lost their grip on power at the August–September 1948 plenum of the PWP, not long before the creation of the PUWP in December 1948.⁴⁹ At the said plenum, Gomułka was removed from the position of secretary general of the PWP. Among other things, Gomułka’s insistence on independent path policies within the Soviet bloc brought him the accusation of attempting a “right-wing nationalistic deviation.”⁵⁰ Consequently, he was forced to confess that he had been wrong when he sought to follow the “Polish road to socialism” instead of applying the Stalinist model: “I understand that the tendencies toward separating our Polish road from the Soviet experience and practice are completely false.... It is clear that the core of the right-nationalist complex of which I speak was of necessity my attitude toward the Soviet Union, toward the CPSU.” Further on, he acknowledged his “nationalistic provincialism:” “I will do everything possible to root out my underestimation of the actual role of the USSR, an underestimation which was an expression of tendencies of nationalistic provincialism.”⁵¹ At the same plenum of August–September 1948, Gomułka was replaced with the “Muscovite” Bolesław Bierut, and he was subsequently marginalized and then arrested for a period. However, he did not face a show trial.

Under Bierut, the country underwent an accelerated process of Stalinization: the party and the trade unions were purged, the army was reorganized on the Soviet model, and the collectivization of agriculture started, although it was never completed. As shown above, the Stalinist model of economic mobilization imposed on Poland during the Six-Year Plan 1950–55 led to a worsening of the living standard of the population towards the mid-1950s. In the political realm, however, Khrushchev’s 1956 “secret speech” announced changes throughout Sovietized Europe. Quite

unexpectedly, Bierut died of a heart failure in Moscow, in March 1956. His place as first secretary of the CC of the PUWP was taken by Edward Ochab. The new leader had to mediate between two “socially politically and ideologically distinct factions” within the PUWP.⁵² The Natolin group, from which the so-called partisan faction would develop later on, comprised second-rank Stalinists of Polish origin, who had strong Soviet ties and understood reforms in terms of personnel change. The Puławy group, which was less homogeneous, included first-rank Stalinists and party activists of Jewish origin who advocated economic reform and institutional change, while envisaging more independence from Moscow.⁵³

In the conditions of Khrushchev’s de-Stalinization campaign, the bloody suppression of the June revolt conducted by workers from the Stalin Works in Poznań precipitated political changes at the highest levels of the party. At the Eighth Plenary Meeting of the PUWP, held on 19–21 October 1956, Gomułka was reelected as supreme leader of the party. As Weydenthal notes, “Gomułka was the only prominent personality within the party with a clearly established and well-known record of opposition to Stalinism.”⁵⁴ Thus, his election was perceived at both elite and mass levels as a victory of the national line. The new leader of the PUWP succeeded in securing a limited legitimacy for the party, but this was going to last as long as the party was able to provide for the population and improve their standard of living. As Leslie et al. observe: “When Gomułka returned to power in October 1956 the gap between the party and the nation had become the narrowest in postwar history, although it soon began widening again.” The same authors further note: “During the second half of his rule the gap widened dangerously.... Gomułka’s fall was in the end to be brought about by the working class, weary of years which saw no rise in their real wages.”⁵⁵ Indeed, from the late 1950s onwards the plan targets rose again and political control over society, including the Catholic Church, increased.⁵⁶ Moreover, the PUWP

leader relied increasingly on the nationalist partisan faction within the party led by General Mieczysław Moczar.⁵⁷

By the mid-1960s, the regime had to face growing activism by young scholars and intellectuals. In January 1968, the authorities took the decision to terminate the performance of the play *Dziady* (The Forefathers), by Adam Mickiewicz (1798–1855), staged at the National Theatre in Warsaw. The pretext was that the play of the great Polish Romantic poet stirred anti-Soviet stances among audiences. Students in Warsaw organized a protest on the occasion of the last performance of the play. Consequently, arrests were carried out. This opened a period of student unrest and intellectual criticism against the regime. During the month of March, students and professors at Warsaw University – some of them of Jewish origin, were harassed or even ousted from the university. Instead of calming down the situation, the authorities escalated the conflict into a campaign against so-called “Zionist elements,” which culminated with purges of Jewish communists from prominent positions in the party and other institutions. As underlined, the “anti-Zionist” campaign also served the purpose of marginalizing Gomułka’s enemies within the Politburo and of purging the “revisionists” who advocated a reform of the system.⁵⁸

The revolt by students and intellectuals against the intervention of the party-state in the cultural realm was eventually suppressed. However, another wave of working-class discontent provoked a political change in the year 1970. As mentioned, the price increases to a majority of basic consumer goods provoked the strike of the workers of the Lenin Shipyard in Gdańsk on 14 December 1970. The protests spread to the nearby industrial centers of Gdynia and Elbląg, and further on to Szczecin. The workers were brutally repressed, but the way the situation was handled created another major split at the top of the PUWP. Thus, Gomułka was asked to resign and, on 20 December 1970, Edward Gierek became first secretary of the party.

Gierek’s political style was different from Gomułka’s. Seeking compromise and displaying readiness to negotiate with the working class, he was able to secure widespread support for the PUWP in the early 1970s. Initially, his strategy of heavy borrowing from the West to make massive investments in Polish industry seemed to bear fruit: industrial production grew and so did wages. However, the development of the consumer goods sector did not match the steady growth in purchasing power. In order to curtail the increased demand for consumer goods, the only solution was to raise prices. This was announced on 24 June 1976, and was to be applied from 27 June onwards. As in June 1956 and December 1970, outbursts of working-class unrest were followed by swift repression. In 1976, however, society organized itself in face of repression: the creation of the KOR laid the foundations of the cross-class alliance that made Poland a special case in Sovietized ECE. The price increases were withdrawn but this did not solve the social problems: the demand for consumer goods remained high and could not be met. As Weydenthal notes, over the 1970–80 period in Poland, “the stability of food prices, and particularly those for meat, had long been a barometer of the public’s mood.”⁵⁹

The price increases to consumer goods remained inevitably on the agenda of the regime. After it was officially announced that basic foodstuffs would cost more, the scenario of working-class unrest repeated itself in the summer of 1980, but only with regard to the initiation of the protests. At the Lenin Shipyard in Gdańsk, the protesters, contrary to the scenarios of 1956, 1970 and 1976, engaged in a non-violent occupation strike and asked for the right to establish an independent trade union. Their demand was finally accepted by the Gierek regime on 30 August, and Solidarity was born. August 1980–December 1981 was a period of political turmoil and growing social demands. During this period, three political changes are worth noting. First, in September 1980, Kania

replaced Gierek as first secretary of PUWP. Second, in February 1981, General Jaruzelski was appointed prime minister. Finally, in October 1981 Kania resigned from his position and Prime Minister Jaruzelski became first secretary of the PUWP. As noted, it was for the first time in PUWP's history that a "communist in uniform" had taken over the leadership of the party. On 13 December 1981, General Jaruzelski carried out the military coup that put an end to the first period in the pre-1989 history of Solidarity.⁶⁰

It is widely agreed in the scholarly literature on the subject that the military coup of December 1981 was very well planned and thoroughly carried out. Solidarity was effectively neutralized, its leaders arrested and Polish society paralyzed. The newly created Military Council of National Salvation (*Wojskowa Rada Ocalenia Narodowego*—WRON) became the country's supreme authority. Political power concentrated in the hands of General Jaruzelski who subsequently became both head of the National Defense Committee (*Komitet Obrony Kraju*—KOK) and Chairman of the Council of State. As Chairman of the Council of State he had the power to declare a state of emergency, and as head of National Defense Committee, which was the highest level body in charge of national security affairs, he had the means to enforce it.⁶¹

In Andrzej Swidlicki's view, the introduction of Martial Law in Poland was the result of a clash between two conflicting concepts of law: "Solidarity represented the traditional concept of law as a system of rules and restrictions that applied to both the authorities and the citizens." This, however, conflicted with the vision of the power elite. As he further points out: "The ruling apparatus ... did not feel itself bound by the existing legal provisions and reached for non-constitutional, emergency powers to restore its position as the uncontested authority in making, interpreting and applying the law." The same author further asserts: "Martial Law was devised

in such a way as to leave the authorities (headed by the party's military arm) free to apply forms of repression of whatever scale and duration they considered necessary."⁶² As writer Sławomir Mrożek puts it, the imposition of Martial Law exposed what he considered the "original sin" of the communist regime in Poland, i.e., its illegality and illegitimacy.⁶³

The Jaruzelski regime managed to rule the country mainly through administrative coercion. This is not to say that force was not applied selectively to suppress or contain overt political opposition. At the same time, the year 1983 represents a chronological landmark due to the revoking of Martial Law. Following Swidlicki, one can discern four stages in the post-1981 "normalization" of Poland. The first stage coincided with Davies' military dictatorship period and spanned from 13 December 1981 to 21 July 1983, when Martial Law was revoked and a partial amnesty was granted. The second stage, July 1983–July 1984, lasted from the partial amnesty of 1983 to the general amnesty of 1984, when a large majority of the political prisoners were liberated. The third stage, July 1984–September 1986, was characterized by the ability of the regime to control society; during this third stage the number of political prisoners grew again. The fourth stage can be defined as a period of stagnation. It started with another general amnesty in September 1986, continued with an outburst of social discontent in the summer of 1988 and came to an end with the decision to open talks with Solidarity that Jaruzelski imposed on the party in January 1989.⁶⁴

When analyzing the context in which the decision to open talks with Solidarity was made, Jaruzelski's personality and leadership style deserve further examination. An interesting report on Jaruzelski's "attitude, behavior and style" was provided by Colonel Ryszard Kukliński, a senior officer on the Polish General Staff. Kukliński, who had served as aide to the Polish prime minister

and party leader Jaruzelski, defected to the United States in December 1981, shortly before the declaration of Martial Law.⁶⁵ According to Kukliński, upon his coming to power Jaruzelski's vision of the Soviet bloc as a sort of "socialist Commonwealth" was in line with the tenets of the Brezhnev Doctrine. Consequently, Jaruzelski discouraged the independent stances of other "fraternal countries," especially the Romanian stance:

In the span of the last decade, Jaruzelski evinced ... that he is decidedly against the course of becoming independent of the USSR which Romania had chosen to follow. The Romanian signals, which I personally transmitted from Romania, and which indicated that they expected the Poles to take a more independent position at the Warsaw Pact forum, Jaruzelski considered these nearly a plot or counter-revolutionary move and discarded the ideas with contempt.⁶⁶

At the same time, Kukliński's analysis of Jaruzelski's personality traits may give some insight into the way in which the PUWP leader and army commander-in-chief made his decisions:

Jaruzelski has an inborn instinct for discipline and obedience combined within an instilled worship for power.... The cult of power and the ecstasy which he experienced in exercising it resulted in the situation in which once having achieved power he never shared it with anyone else.... He never made decisions precipitously, especially under the influence of emotions or passion. Difficult decisions took their time to ripen with him, at times for weeks ... and the most difficult (the imposition of Martial Law) took several months. Though he gladly took advantage of the advice and expertise of the specialists and listened to the proposals of his closest associates, it was a rare occasion when he was influenced by their views. His decisions

were independent and resulted rather from his own contemplations, frequently in solitude.⁶⁷

The declaration of Martial Law in Poland in December 1981 marked a shift in terms of regime political culture. Since the establishment of the party in December 1948 and until December 1981, the PUWP's inner circle of power was characterized by a low level of cohesion. From late 1981 to early 1989, under the lead of the "communists in military uniform," the power relations within the PUWP were modified and the political culture of Polish communism was significantly altered. The coming to power of the "military party" put an end to party factionalism. After all, the existence of factions of hardliners and softliners within the PUWP, whatever this meant at different moments in time, contributed to the birth of Solidarity in August 1980. Under Jaruzelski, political decision-making was concentrated in the hands of the supreme leader of the party, who had his decisions obeyed in accordance with the established military chain of command. Therefore, it may be argued that in early 1989 Jaruzeski had the means to impose his political will upon the party and thus inaugurate a phase of political bargaining with the democratic opposition. As Ray Taras observes: "Jaruzelski's role in pursuing roundtable talks and the democratic breakthrough that they produced was ... pivotal." The same author also referred to a Solidarity activist who cited a remark by Jaruzelski: "Please remember that only General de Gaulle was capable of getting France out of Algeria," and subsequently concluded: "This was a portentous statement because it meant that only General Jaruzelski could get the PUWP out of Poland."⁶⁸ This statement deserves further examination.

In the new international context determined by the Soviet renunciation of the Brezhnev Doctrine, Jaruzelski's decision could be interpreted as a preemptive action intended to save what could still be saved in political terms at that moment. The decision of

the supreme leader of the PUWP to initiate a second preemptive action in January 1989 was influenced most probably by the success of his first action of the kind, i.e., the imposition of Martial Law in December 1981 by the “military party,” thus avoiding a possible Soviet military intervention.⁶⁹ In terms of path dependence, however, a major difference existed between the two preemptive actions. The imposition of Martial Law in December 1981 was aimed at path stabilization, in the context of the Brezhnev Doctrine and in the conditions of Solidarity’s ongoing “self-limiting revolution.” In 1988–89, in the new context of Soviet-Polish relations determined by Gorbachev’s renunciation of the Brezhnev Doctrine, and faced with a new wave of contestation from below, Jaruzelski opted for a political scenario based on path departure.⁷⁰ Consequently, the supreme leader of the PUWP decided to apply a second preemptive action and negotiate with Solidarity the transition to a new political order. However, the political action by the leadership of the PUWP cannot fully explain the road to the historic elections of June 1989 in Poland. It was also the strategy of self-restraint interiorized by Solidarity from the very moment of its establishment in August 1980 and its willingness to negotiate in a hostile environment. The following section addresses the intricate issue of the political cultures of resistance in communist Poland.

Political Cultures of Resistance

From the perspective of the “negotiated revolution” of 1989, it may be argued that the specificity of the Polish case, as far as the structuring of the democratic opposition is concerned, resides in two aspects: (1) the establishment of a cross-class alliance that had no precedent in the Soviet bloc; and (2) the role played by the Catholic Church in supporting national aspirations under communist rule. This nexus

between rebellious workers, dissident intellectuals and a sympathetic Catholic Church created the basis for a special kind of societal opposition, which ultimately gave birth to Solidarity. In order to explain the process that led to the appearance of the aforementioned nexus, one has to identify the major turning points in the relationship between Polish society at large and the communist regime. The above-mentioned periodization proposed by Davies, i.e., communist takeover, 1944–48; Polish Stalinism, 1948–56; national-communism, 1956–80; interval of Solidarity, 1980–81; military dictatorship, 1981–83; and terminal illness, 1983–89, does not tell us much about the structuring of the opposition groups in working-class environments and intellectual milieus.

With regard to the societal responses to regime policies, the years 1956, 1968, 1970, 1976, 1980 and 1988–89 become important. Moreover, out of all these dates two moments proved to be crucial: (1) 1976, which marked the initiation of a cross-class alliance in the aftermath of the June riots through the establishment of the KOR; and (2) 1980, which marked the birth of Solidarity. Obviously, the history of Polish dissent is more intricate and one should be aware of the nuances. There was a staunch resistance to Sovietization in the immediate aftermath of World War II. A revisionist current attempted gradually to reform the PUWP, until a wave of repression with strong anti-Semitic accents was unleashed in March 1968 against revisionists from within, and critical intellectuals from without, the party. At the same time, towards the mid-1970s younger Catholic clergy became more sympathetic to the views of the opposition. A comprehensive analysis of all these issues, which are nonetheless important and should not be neglected, would go far beyond the scope of the present book. Consequently, this section concentrates primarily on the processes that led to the birth of Solidarity, enabled its survival under Martial Law and made possible its revival in 1988–89 as the only redoubtable opposition force.

It is well known that Polish society witnessed three major waves of working-class unrest before Solidarity, i.e., in 1956, 1970 and 1976. As already noted, the basic causes of the outbursts of social discontent were either the stiff work norms and low wages, or the price increases to basic foodstuffs. The first major revolt, that of 1956, occurred in the context of the economic imbalance provoked by the targets of the Six-Year Plan 1950–55, which led to a decline in the living standard of the working class. The major issues of discontent were low wages, stiff working norms and improper working conditions. The revolt broke out on 28 June 1956 at a major plant located in the city of Poznań, the Joseph Stalin Works (*Zakłady Metalowe Imieniem Józefa Stalina w Poznaniu*–ZISPO).⁷¹ Workers went on strike first, and then marched into town demanding a wage increase and more dwellings for workers, as well as a revision of the working norms and high taxation. The protesters were joined by workers from other factories in Poznań and the crowd grew to some 100,000 people.⁷² The march started peacefully, but in downtown Poznań the demonstration took a violent form. Some authors argue that the violence was sparked by rumors that the delegation sent to negotiate with the authorities had been arrested.⁷³ The protest was brutally suppressed by the army and resulted, according to official estimates, in 57 people killed and more than 500 wounded. Most of the deaths occurred on 28 June.⁷⁴

The next wave of protests from below occurred in 1970, in response to the Gomułka regime's announcement that the prices of a series of basic foodstuffs would be raised significantly.⁷⁵ As already pointed out, workers from the Lenin Shipyard in Gdańsk went on strike on 14 December 1970 and demanded the cancellation of the planned food price increases. Strikes occurred also in the neighboring city of Gdynia, at the Paris Commune Shipyard, as well as in the other major shipbuilding city of the Baltic Coast, Szczecin, at the Warski Shipyard.⁷⁶ The way the

Gdańsk protest unfolded was quite similar to the Poznań uprising of 1956: the workers went on strike and marched into the town, where the authorities intervened in force and the protest was violently suppressed. In Gdynia, on 17 December, the troops fired at the demonstrators. As a result, 42 workers were killed and over 1,000 wounded.⁷⁷

The waves of protest of 1956 and 1970 indicated that social discontent was very likely, especially in working-class milieus, to result in violent outbursts that were repressed with difficulty, only after the army intervened and fired at the protesters. Furthermore, in the initial stage of the revolts, the sense of mobilization and cohesion of the workers proved to be quite high. At the same time, none of the protests resulted in longer periods of working-class mobilization or in a more comprehensive plan of action. Thus, no alternative project aiming at devising a framework for the self-organization of the workers and articulation of their demands emerged from the riots of 1956 and 1970. This was also due to the fact that the workers' protest actions did not receive support and advice from dissident intellectuals. With regard to this aspect, Jan Kubik notes: "In 1968, when students and intellectuals protested against censorship and demanded democratic reforms, the workers did not join in. In 1970, when workers protested against price increases, intellectuals and students stood by."⁷⁸ The two moments of revolt, i.e., 1968 and 1970, also revealed the divisions within the societal opposition to the regime. As Kubik further points out: "However simplified this picture may seem, it was burned into the collective memory, and there were people who realized that during the next confrontation between the state and the society these two groups must form a united front."⁷⁹ With regard to the formation of a "united front" of the opposition, the year 1976 represented a radical turn.

The chronic imbalance between the consumer goods available on the market and people's purchasing power forced the

communist authorities to increase the prices of consumer goods from time to time, as one of the most effective deflationary measures. This action always met the strong opposition of the working class, which proved able to mobilize itself swiftly and react violently. The scenario of the 1956 and 1970 revolts repeated itself almost identically in 1976. The economic boom of the first half of the Gierek era, i.e., the period of the FYP 1971–75, led to an increase in wages and thus in the purchasing power of the population. Demand for consumer goods grew steadily, while the goods and services offered could not absorb the extra money. The authorities were thus forced to raise the prices of basic foodstuffs in June 1976. In response, on 25 June 1976 workers from the Ursus Tractor Factory, located in the vicinity of Warsaw, and General Walter Mechanical Works in Radom went on strike protesting against the increased food prices. The Ursus protesters occupied the nearby railway lines, stopping traffic. In Radom, the protesters marched into the town, where workers from other factories and city dwellers joined them. In total, the crowd numbered around 6,000 people. Whereas the Ursus protest was suppressed more easily, the Radom events turned into violent clashes between riot police and protesters. Accounts state that bystanders were also beaten or arrested by the police. On the same evening of 25 June 1976, the price reform was withdrawn.

In contradistinction with similar situations in the past, the after-strike pattern of repression took a more serious turn with regard to the number of protesters sentenced for misdemeanor. The estimates vary from 10,000 to 20,000 dismissed.⁸⁰ Furthermore, in contrast with the previous lack of solidarity with the workers who were sentenced to various terms in prison or to heavy fines, this time the societal response was different. Intellectual groups and other nuclei of civil society mobilized themselves and joined forces in order to provide support for the families of the imprisoned workers. Michnik, one of the most prominent Polish dissidents,

has recalled the way he decided to support the workers put on trial because of their participation to the 1976 riots: “I remember attending a trial in 1976 that implicated some Ursus workers; I heard the condemnations, I saw the wives crying, and I shook with rage. I felt that it would be inadmissible to drop these people. And I started writing a protest letter on the part of the intellectuals right after.”⁸¹ Michnik also spoke about the involvement of another prominent figure of Polish dissent, Jacek Kuroń, on the part of the workers in the aftermath of the 1976 working-class protests: “After the 1976 events at Radom and Ursus, during the worker demonstrations and the reprisals that followed, Jacek Kuroń declared that we had already betrayed the workers once and that such a thing should not be repeated. He was right, and we kept our promise.”⁸²

The KOR was founded on 23 September 1976 in order to assist the victims of the repression of the June 1976 riots and their families. According to Michnik, the KOR was born “out of a moral impulse.”⁸³ The activity of the KOR was structured on two levels: (1) providing medical and financial aid to the victims and their families; and (2) providing information about the victims of repression through open letters and manifestos. Among the most prominent figures that became members of the KOR may be mentioned Kuroń, Edward Lipiński and Jan Józef Lipski. Michnik, who was at the time on a trip to the West, became a member in May 1977, one day before his return to Poland.⁸⁴ The importance of the KOR resides in the fact that apart from providing relief for the imprisoned workers and their families it served as model for a number of similar civic initiatives that emerged throughout Poland. One year later, in September 1977, some KOR activists founded an unofficial publication entitled *Robotnik* (The Worker), which soon became an important means of advocating the self-organization of the workers and the creation of independent trade unions. In September 1979, *Robotnik* published a document

of major importance, a “Charter of Workers’ Rights,” which argued in favor of establishing independent trade unions in accordance with the international labor legislation that the Polish Government had ratified.⁸⁵ Thus, the structuring of civil society in Poland took a new course in the late 1970s, after the June 1976 workers’ revolts and the subsequent creation of the KOR, which inaugurated the cross-class alliance that would find its ultimate form in the Solidarity movement. As Garton Ash perceptively puts it: “By 1979, then, there was already the embryo of that tacit alliance of workers, intelligentsia and Church, unprecedented in Polish history, unique in the Soviet bloc, unseen in the West, which was to grow into Solidarity.”⁸⁶

In the aftermath of the 1976 riots, the Gierek regime, although faced with growing economic problems, tried to avoid new price increases. However, towards the late 1980s, the state of affairs proved to be increasingly difficult to maintain in the same way. As mentioned, a campaign for “austerity and unity,” which was meant to prepare the population for food price increases, was initiated in the aftermath of the Eighth Congress of the PUP (February 1980).⁸⁷ However, the announcement of a new pricing system for meat provoked over 150 strikes throughout Poland by the end of the first week of August 1980.⁸⁸ The workers at the Lenin Shipyard in Gdańsk went on strike on 14 August 1980. Their non-violent, round-the-clock and sit-down strike inspired their fellow workers in other workplaces on the Polish Baltic Coast, who also went on strike. Two days later, on 16 August, delegates from 388 enterprises formed an Inter-Factory Strike Committee (*Międzyzakładowy Komitet Strajkowy*—MKS), which was intended to enable communication among, and ultimately unite, the workplaces where strikes were declared.⁸⁹ Subsequently, on 18 August 1980, the representatives of the Gdańsk strikers issued a list of 21 demands. An essential point on the list of demands was the request to establish “free unions, independent from the party

and from employers, according to the 87th Convention of the International Organization of Labor, ratified by the Polish People’s Republic.”⁹⁰ As Staniszkis has noted, by 28 August 1980 there were already four MKSs established in Poland, representing over 800 workplaces in Gdańsk (with more than 600 enterprises), Szczecin (over 200 enterprises), Wrocław and Elbląg.⁹¹

A situation that had no precedent whatsoever in the Soviet bloc developed in Poland: the working-class rebelled against the power elite of the workers’ state without attempting to change the “socialist order” in the country. The authorities had no pretext for intervention in force. Eventually, on 31 August 1980, the government was compelled to subscribe to the workers’ demands and a formal agreement was signed in Gdańsk. Lech Wałęsa, the electrician who emerged as the leader of the Gdańsk strikers, became the national leader of Solidarity, the first independent trade union established under a communist regime. The following month, on 17 September, the nucleus of determined strikers from the Lenin Shipyard in Gdańsk saw itself transformed into a large independent trade union with approximately 3 million members in some 3,500 workplaces. By the end of 1980, Solidarity numbered approximately 10 million members in a country in which the total active population amounted to around 17 million people.⁹²

One is thus compelled to answer a simple question regarding the birth of Solidarity: Why did a social movement of such magnitude appear only in communist Poland? This section addresses the birth of Solidarity as an “outcome” of social and cultural factors by focusing also on the peculiarity of communist Poland among the countries of “actually existing socialism.” In their 1984 study dedicated to the birth of Solidarity, Nørgaard and Sampson put forward an explanatory model that, as already mentioned, has inspired the conceptual framework of this book. According to the two authors cited, the birth of Solidarity can be explained by the interplay of three kinds of factors: structural,

conjunctural and nation-specific. The structural factors, common to all state-socialist societies, consist in: “political adaption” and “economic reforms.” Nation-specific factors are structured on three categories: “political consciousness,” “constellation of social forces” and “resources for political action.” In terms of political consciousness, two kinds of factors are considered relevant: “perception of regime competence” and “regime legitimacy.” With regard to the configuration of social forces, two factors are examined: “regime unity” and “societal homogeneity.” The resources for political action are of two kinds: “alternative centers of power” and “prior experience of struggle.” Finally, the conjunctural factors addressed are: “vulnerability to world economic cycles” and “dependence on international détente.”⁹³

Among the structural factors discussed by Nørgaard and Sampson, the economic crisis and especially the increases in food prices determined the protests of 1970, 1976 and 1980. Although the 1956 Poznań revolt was not caused by the increase in food prices, its causes were also economic, originating in societal dissatisfaction with the regime in the aftermath of the increased mobilization imposed through the Six-Year Plan. If one considers the six nation-specific factors proposed by Nørgaard and Sampson, one finds out that all six were present in Poland in the late 1970s. The poor perception of the regime’s competence was deepened by the failure of the strategy devised by Gierek in order to ensure sustained industrial modernization. The regime’s deep deficit of legitimacy was determined by the generalized popular perception of the postwar regime as being alien and anti-national, as a consequence of its imposition from without under the protection of the Soviets. David S. Mason’s analysis of the 1981 public opinion surveys indicates that the Poles openly expressed “the belief that the Soviet Union was the main threat to Poland’s sovereignty.”⁹⁴ The weak unity of the regime was proved by the management of the crises of 1956 and 1970, when the significant

cleavages that existed at the level of the ruling elite surfaced and resulted in the change of the party leader of the time. As shown below, the existence of an independent Roman Catholic Church in Poland provided an alternative center of power, and the election of a Polish Pope in October 1978 made a massive contribution to the Polish national revival. Moreover, the Pope’s visit to Poland in June 1979 made an immense contribution to the “dissolving” of the authority of the party and the structuring of the societal opposition.⁹⁵ Finally, the previous experience of protest against the regime was shaped by interwar working class traditions (proved by the Poznań workers) and the entire history of workers’ protests under communist rule (1956, 1970 and 1976).

As suggested above, Solidarity could be established also because the strategy employed by the strikers was different from that of the previous waves of unrest. In 1980 the strikes were non-violent, so that no public property was destroyed by infuriated protesters. The strikers did not leave their workplaces in order to demonstrate their discontent in front of official buildings; they appealed to occupation strikes, thus transforming their workplaces into bulwarks against the repressive forces of a state that claimed to be theirs. This complicated enormously any plans to put down the strikes by force, since the strikers were able to defend themselves and resist for a longer period of time. Furthermore, the cross-class alliance between workers and intelligentsia, which was established in the aftermath of the 1976 strikes through the creation of the KOR, benefited from the support of a sympathetic Catholic Church, whose symbolic capital grew tremendously after 1978. As Kennedy asserts: “The combination of economic crisis and the lesson of the likely failure of isolated protests is what brought the strata together.”⁹⁶ Moreover, the Polish critical intelligentsia created an “aura” around the coastal workers’ protest and conveyed such an image outside Poland, thereby focusing the attention of both national and international public opinion on Solidarity.

One should stress once again Solidarity's special character of "self-limiting revolution," as defined by Staniszkis, which shaped the political cultures of resistance in communist Poland and determined to a large extent the negotiated character of the Polish 1989 revolution.⁹⁷ As Alain Touraine et al. argue, Solidarity set three strategic limits to its action: (1) the leading role of the party in the state was explicitly guaranteed by the Gdańsk agreement; (2) Poland remained within the socialist camp; and (3) trade-union demands were to be moderated because of the economic crisis.⁹⁸ The general strike became a formidable weapon of the "powerless" and created a situation in which the regime, if it wanted to avoid a bloodbath of immense proportions, had to negotiate with the strikers. As Kennedy notes: "It was the 'innovations' of occupation strikes, solidarity strikes, inter-enterprise strike committees, independent trade unions and national solidarity that enabled the movement Solidarity to be born and cause a major, if temporary, transformation of Soviet type society."⁹⁹ Thus, it may be argued that the mechanism which resulted in the birth of Solidarity was based on three major elements: (1) the appeal to round-the-clock, non-violent, sit-down strikes as forms of protest; (2) the formation of the Inter-Factory Strike Committees whose role was to unite the workplaces in a common protest against the regime; and (3) the very basic demand for free trade unions and the creation of a national structure to coordinate them.

The time of Solidarity as an alternative society came to an end on 13 December 1981, when a military coup brought to the fore the "communists in uniform." Solidarity did react to the imposition of Martial Law and made use of its only powerful weapon: the strike. However, the military action was well prepared in advance and was carried out with rapidity and precision. Solidarity leaders were arrested and communications (telephone and telex) were interrupted. At the factory level, local Solidarity activists were put in a difficult situation by not having the

possibility of communicating and coordinating their actions with their fellows at regional and country levels. In such conditions, a general strike could not be declared. In spite of the hopeless situation, numerous revolts broke out spontaneously in various industrial branches throughout Poland. In some cases, the protest actions lasted longer and the repression was violent and resulted in casualties among the strikers, as in the case of some Silesian coalmines.¹⁰⁰ The fundamental problem was that Solidarity was forced to withdraw underground and engage primarily in defensive actions. Nevertheless, the very fact that Solidarity continued to exist was a victory in itself for the Polish opposition.

From the point of view of Solidarity's unequal struggle with the Soviet-backed military machine of the state, it is relevant to divide the period December 1981–January 1989, following Swidlicki, into the same four parts that have been mentioned when addressing the political culture of Polish communism: (1) the Martial Law period, 13 December 1981–21 July 1983 (from the declaration of Martial Law up to its lifting); (2) July 1983–July 1984 (from the partial amnesty of 1983 to the general amnesty of 1984); (3) July 1984–September 1986 (a period of increased control of society by the regime, during which the number of political prisoners rose again); and (4) September 1986–January 1989 (a period of increased social mobilization, culminating in the wave of strikes in the summer of 1988 which contributed to the historic decision of the PUWP to initiate talks with Solidarity).

After the imposition of Martial Law, from December 1981 to July 1984, more than 5,000 people were arrested and many of them were detained without standing trial.¹⁰¹ Solidarity was interdicted and subsequently outlawed in October 1982. Some of the most prominent leaders of Solidarity and the KOR were arrested and after a period of internment were declared "suspects under arrest." Known as the "eleven hostages," they formed in fact two groups. A first group comprised well-known figures of the

KOR, such as Jacek Kuroń, Jan Lityński, Adam Michnik and Henryk Wujec. The second group comprised seven members of the National Commission of Solidarity, namely: Andrzej Gwiazda, Seweryn Jaworski, Marian Jurczyk, Karol Modzelewski, Grzegorz Palka, Andrzej Rozpłochowski and Jan Rulewski.¹⁰² The authorities wanted to prove that both the KOR and Solidarity were in fact subversive organizations aiming at overthrowing the existing political order in Poland. The main objective of the KOR, that of helping workers to organize themselves in the aftermath of the 1976 food riots, alongside the obvious “self-limiting” character of Solidarity, were both refuted. After being delayed for some two and a half years, the trial of the eleven was terminated through the amnesty granted by the regime in July 1984.

A thorough investigation of the complex issues related to repression and resistance in Poland during the period December 1981–January 1989 would go beyond the scope of this section. It should be stressed, however, that in spite of the generalized use of force by the regime, the opposition could not be silenced. The official statements announcing the number of illegal activities suppressed by the regime can give one an idea about the extent of the opposition networks in Poland. In 1986, the minister of internal affairs, General Czesław Kiszczak, announced that the authorities had dissolved some 1,600 illegal groups, discovered around 1,200 printing locations and confiscated approximately 700 printing machines.¹⁰³ Zbigniew Bujak, one of the prominent underground leaders of Solidarity, describes the situation of the union under Martial Law as follows: “Solidarity is weak, but it is the strongest organization that could be created in this situation. If we had abandoned Solidarity when it was banned, we would have been more divided as a society.”¹⁰⁴ The unfolding of events during 1988 proved that Bujak was right when he affirmed that Solidarity was the strongest independent organization that could be established in the inimical conditions of state socialism.

Before addressing the events of the period 1988–89 that led to the Polish “negotiated revolution,” it is important to discuss a particular aspect of the Polish road to the 1989 regime change, namely, the role played by the Catholic Church. Throughout Sovietized ECE, churches had to ensure their continuity and care for their flock in the given conditions. Traditional denominations generally acted as repositories of national aspirations, as well as of the hopes and expectations of the people. The need for the continuation and expansion of pastoral activities and social work made Churches adopt policies aiming at fulfilling their institutional needs. In this respect, Pedro Ramet identifies four factors that determine the institutional needs of a religious organization: (1) size; (2) dispersion; (3) symbolic resources; and (4) operational ideology.¹⁰⁵ Let us examine the way these factors operated in the case of the Catholic Church in Poland. The first element that influences the relationship between a religious organization and the secular authority is its size: the larger the religious organization, the greatest its need to come to terms with the secular authority. In the aftermath of World War II and the subsequent settlements, Poland became not only ethnically homogenous but also overwhelmingly Catholic. As some authors argue, the size of the Catholic Church in Poland determined the ambiguous attitude of the Church’s top hierarchy toward the regime until the middle 1970s. Korbonski, for instance, notices that: “From the mid-1950s to the mid-1970s, the policy of the [Polish Catholic] Church was focused primarily on safeguarding its own position vis-à-vis the government.” Furthermore, the same author points towards a generational change within the Church itself, and argues that the involvement of the Catholic Church in political dissent after 1976 was related to the increased political activism among the younger clergy.¹⁰⁶

A second element in the analysis of the needs of a religious organization is its dispersion: the greater the interaction of the religious organization with external organizations, the greater its

ability to escape the regime's capacity of controlling it. The most obvious case is that of Catholics, but it was also, to some extent, the situation of the Muslims or the neo-Protestants in ECE. In the case of the Polish Catholic Church, due to its affiliation with an external ecclesiastical center, i.e., the Vatican, which was out of the reach of the communist authorities, the regime had increasing difficulties in controlling its activity.¹⁰⁷ The election of a Polish Pope in 1978 further complicated the matter. As far as the dispersion factor is concerned, traditional Protestant churches or the autocephalous Orthodox Churches were more likely to yield to the will of the communist authorities in comparison with the Catholic Church or the neo-Protestant denominations.

The symbolic resources of a religious organization contribute to its capacity to resist in the face of an authoritarian regime, if that organization decides to do so. Moreover, when an organized religion decides to confront the secular authorities, an increase in the symbolic resources of the respective denomination usually leads to an increase in its defiance towards the regime. Furthermore, one should not forget that in the Polish case something truly special happened. Cardinal Karol Wojtyła, the Archbishop of Krakow, was elected to the papacy and became the first non-Italian pope since 1522. Cardinal Wojtyła assumed the papal throne as John Paul II. This event contributed immensely to the consolidation of the authority of the Polish Catholic Church both at home and abroad. It is worth noting that leading Soviet officials regarded the Catholic Church as "one of the most dangerous forces in Polish society."¹⁰⁸ Furthermore, the gruesome murder of the pro-Solidarity priest Jerzy Popiełuszko in 1984 also added to the symbolic capital of the Catholic Church. Father Popiełuszko, the curate of the Church of St. Stanisław Kostka in Warsaw, became a target for the secret police because of the pro-Solidarity messages that he included in his sermons. For instance, in a sermon delivered in May 1984 he stated: "Solidarity remains a glorious word to which millions of

Poles attach their hopes and desires." In August the same year, speaking about the significance of the birth of Solidarity he said: "Solidarity, born in August 1980, was not only a union ... it was the striving of the whole nation for truth, justice and freedom."¹⁰⁹ In October 1984, Father Popiełuszko was kidnapped and subsequently assassinated by three secret police officers. There were many other cases of priests who, taking great personal risks, challenged the authorities during Martial Law. However, the fate of Father Popiełuszko epitomized in many respects the fate of a whole nation subdued by the "communists in uniform" and therefore increased tremendously the symbolic resources of the Polish Catholic Church. Finally, a fourth element of major importance for the present analysis is the operational ideology of a given religious organization. Traditional denominations, including the Catholic Church, are less oriented towards proselytization. In conditions of deep economic crisis and increased moral and spiritual confusion the neo-Protestant denominations, whose operational ideology focuses on proselytization, could experience rapid growth in numbers. Nonetheless, the symbolic capital of the respective Church could act as a substitute for the lack of an operational ideology oriented primarily towards proselytization.

To sum up, the Polish Catholic Church devised up to 1976–79 a strategy of coming to terms with the communist regime. From the point of view of the development of oppositional stances towards the regime, the significance of the period 1976–79 is threefold. Besides the emergence of a cross-class alliance in the aftermath of the 1976 working-class revolts and the birth of the KOR, the election of a Polish Pope in 1978 increased tremendously the symbolic resources of the Polish Catholic Church. In addition, the historic visit of Pope John Paul II to his native Poland in 1979 indicated that Polish society was perfectly able to organize itself by the very fact that no significant incident occurred during the visit in spite of the large crowds that gathered

on that occasion.¹¹⁰ The role of the Church in the process of political socialization and thus in the formation of a set of anti-regime attitudes became significant especially after 1978. After the imposition of Martial Law, the role of the Church became even more important. As Swidlicki points out, the major objectives of the Catholic Church in Poland after December 1981 were: (1) to prevent bloodshed and unnecessary suffering on the part of the people while keeping up the nation's spirit; (2) to articulate and defend social and national interests in accordance with the Church's teachings and historical experience; (3) to stand by the principles of "social accord" and "national dialogue," which involved playing the role of an intermediary between the authorities and the representatives of society; (4) to provide charitable aid and pastoral service to internees, prisoners and the needy; and (5) to enable Pope John Paul II to make his second pastoral visit to Poland.¹¹¹ During the period 1981–89, the church succeeded in sticking to these principles and, in spite of pressure and harassment, backed more often than not the position of Solidarity. The Catholic Church contributed to the final demise of communist rule in Poland, not least because its teachings fueled a process of political socialization that led to the development of anti-regime stances by the population. In this respect, Davies aptly notes: "In Poland, where the Church said one thing and the State the other; where one's grandmother inevitably contradicted one's teacher... – every man and woman was reminded of right and wrong much more frequently and much more forcefully."¹¹²

As shown above, the imposition of the Martial Law considerably weakened the Polish opposition. Solidarity was banned and was forced to take a defensive stance and transform itself into an underground movement. The army officers in power made extensive use of force in order to tame society. Many important figures of Solidarity and the KOR were interned, while others went underground. However, the commitment to "building civil

societies outside the totalitarian state," as Michnik puts it, did not fade away. After Wałęsa, the leader of Solidarity, was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize in October 1983, he and his independent trade union achieved an even greater international recognition. In the meantime, the international context also changed. The coming to power of Gorbachev and his renunciation of the Brezhnev Doctrine created a new context for relations between the Soviet Union and the "fraternal" countries in ECE. These changes had an impact not only on the power elites in the Soviet bloc, but also on the dissident groups and opposition movements. Upon his release from prison in August 1986, Michnik observed that the general repressive framework devised by the Jaruzelski regime was becoming less and less effective, but so were the underground structures put into place by Solidarity. As he further pointed out, one could observe three major tendencies among Solidarity members and sympathizers: (1) leave the organization; (2) continue the underground struggle; or (3) put pressure on the regime to re-legalize Solidarity. Michnik's central argument is that the transformation of Solidarity into an "open structure" and thus into a political force able to speak on behalf of the Polish opposition represented a fundamental political decision that opened the way for the "negotiated revolution" of 1989: "In the end, Solidarity, under the leadership of Lech Wałęsa, was able to fashion an open structure. This structure allowed Solidarity to confer a national political dimension on the workers' strikes of May and August 1988."¹¹³

It appears that the two waves of social mobilization of April–May and August 1988 eventually convinced the authorities to initiate contacts with Solidarity. General Kiszczak, still minister of internal affairs, met with Wałęsa in late August and in September. Throughout the fall of 1988, the Polish opposition held consultations that eventually resulted in the creation of a Civic Committee, which represented what Michnik has called an

“open structure,” i.e., a coherent structure able to represent all opposition groups. In January 1989, the PUWP decided to open talks with Solidarity. The Polish Roundtable Talks lasted from February to April 1989, and concluded with an agreement signed on 5 April that recognized Solidarity’s legal right to exist and amended the electoral law. In the “semi-free” elections, held on 4 June (the first round) and 18 June (the second round), Solidarity won 69.9 percent of the vote and thus emerged as the indisputable winner of the historic Polish 1989 elections.¹¹⁴ General Jaruzelski was elected president of the republic in July 1989, and held the position until December 1990, when Wałęsa replaced him after new elections.¹¹⁵ General Kiszczak, initially named by Jaruzelski as prime minister, failed to form a government. Subsequently, on 19 August, Jaruzelski named as prime minister Tadeusz Mazowiecki, a non-communist politician, the first ever non-communist prime minister in Polish postwar history. Finally, the Mazowiecki Cabinet was approved by a large majority vote in the Polish Parliament, and thus concluded the most important stage of the Polish “negotiated revolution.”

Reflections on the “Negotiated Revolution” in Poland

The Polish revolution inaugurated the 1989 sequence of collapse of the communist dictatorships in ECE. The case of Poland is the most complicated and difficult to explain especially because the “snowballing effect” did not operate in its instance. This chapter offers a well-grounded explanation of the 1989 events in Poland by systematically applying the model presented in Chapter One to the Polish case. The analysis concentrated first on the structural factors, i.e., economic failure and ideological decay. As shown above, Poland went through four major crises, in 1956, 1970,

1980–81 and 1988–89, which resulted in major political changes at the top of the PUWP. The crises of 1956, 1970 and 1980–81 occurred in a period in which the Brezhnev Doctrine was a “viable part of Moscow’s foreign policy arsenal.”¹¹⁶ The Soviet Union considered that it had the right to restore the “socialist order” in any “fraternal” country where actions from below or from above threatened the existence of the communist rule.

The Polish crisis of 1980–81, however, was different from the previous ones: the working-class protest in Gdańsk did not turn violent. The non-violent, occupation and round-the-clock strike, which benefited from the support of prominent dissident intellectuals, forced the regime to negotiate with the strikers and eventually to permit the establishment of Solidarity. Over the period August 1980–December 1981, Solidarity employed a strategy of “self-limitation” which envisaged a reformation of the system without regime change. In such a situation, the sole effective weapon of the new independent trade union was the general strike, but this weapon proved to be less powerful than previously thought in the face of the “communists in uniform.” The “military party” under General Jaruzelski came to the fore in December 1981, and imposed Martial Law. This indicated that the military arm of the party was not only unwilling to tolerate the existence of Solidarity, but was also able to engage in large-scale domestic military operations.

In 1988–89, a peculiar aggregation of structural, conjunctural and nation-specific factors made the Polish “negotiated revolution” possible. As shown above, in the particular case of Poland one can observe a close relationship between politics, economy and social protest. Based on the criterion of the net investment rate, one can identify four investment cycles in the economy of communist Poland, i.e., 1949–57, 1958–71, 1972–82 and 1983–88. When the fourth investment cycle came to an end in 1988, there were no signs of a different outcome than in the case of the previous three, which had ended with a political crisis. Social dissatisfaction

with the regime was on the rise, and a new wave of social mobilization occurred in April–August 1988. At the same time, the strategy of administrative coercion introduced under the rule of Jaruzelski made ideology void of any mobilizing power. External conjuncture was less favorable than ever for ruling communist parties in ECE, including the PUWP. In 1985, Gorbachev became the new leader of the CPSU and soon afterwards it became clear that the Kremlin envisaged a change of policy with regard to the Sovietized Europe. Beginning in 1987, Gorbachev gradually abandoned the Brezhnev Doctrine, which significantly reduced the margin of maneuver of the “military party” in power in Warsaw. The reformist course imposed by Gorbachev left the leaders of the “fraternal” regimes in ECE to their own devices, while Catholic nationalism fueled by the “Vatican factor” was acting in support of Solidarity.

As demonstrated above, the timing and nature of the Polish “negotiated revolution” can be explained in terms of recent path dependence by taking into account that both political actors which took part in the Polish Roundtable Talks were born of the crisis of 1980–81. Based most probably on the experience of his previous highly successful preemptive action of December 1981, General Jaruzelski made the decision to initiate a second preemptive action and open talks with Solidarity in January 1989. The imposition of Martial Law in December 1981 was aimed at path stabilization, in the context of the Brezhnev Doctrine and in the conditions of Solidarity’s “self-limiting revolution.” In the new context of Soviet-Polish relations determined by Gorbachev’s renunciation of the Brezhnev Doctrine and faced with a new wave of contestation from below, Jaruzelski opted for a scenario of political transformation based on path departure. Consequently, the supreme leader of the PUWP opened negotiations with Solidarity in the hope of controlling the transition to a new political order. Such a decision was eased by the shift in the regime political culture

after December 1981, which enabled the supreme leader of the PUWP to impose his decision on the party. Last, but by no means least, it was Solidarity’s strategy of self-restraint and its ability to negotiate and seek a compromise in a hostile political environment that permitted the negotiations to be finalized and the elections of 4–18 June 1989 to take place.

CHAPTER THREE

Hungary

During the revolutionary year 1989, six communist regimes in ECE collapsed in a particular order, i.e., Poland – Hungary – East Germany – Czechoslovakia – Bulgaria – Romania. A significant feature of the 1989 phenomenon was that the inception of the revolutionary sequence consisted in the Polish and Hungarian “negotiated revolutions,” which were both based on the roundtable talks principle. As discussed in Chapter Two, it was in Poland that the combination of structural, conjunctural and nation-specific factors led to the inauguration of the “great transformation” of 1989. By initiating talks with Solidarity and subsequently opening roundtable talks with the (re)legalized free trade union, the Jaruzelski regime set the “snowball” of political changes in ECE rolling. The similarity between the Polish and Hungarian negotiated revolutions is striking, although differences between the two countries in terms of political development under communist rule at both elite and mass levels did exist. Unlike Poland, which experienced a “self-limiting revolution” in 1980–81, Hungary in

Notes for this chapter begin on page 367.

1956 experienced a bloody revolution, which almost put an end to communist rule in that country. Both events deeply influenced the entire Soviet bloc. While the former marked the beginning of the end of communist rule in ECE, the suppression of the latter had induced years before the idea that the communist regimes were in ECE to stay. More precisely, the Hungarian Revolution of 1956 represented the first major popular uprising in the Soviet bloc that attempted to reverse the existing political order. Its bloody suppression put an end to a double illusion in all the satellite countries. After 1956, it became clear not only that the Soviet Union would not allow any of its allies to defect from the WTO, but also that the NATO countries would not interfere in the Soviet sphere of influence. In spite of the different paths taken prior to 1989, Hungary's exit from communism followed quite closely the Polish model of roundtable talks. At the same time, the political changes in Hungary accelerated the pace of political changes in other Sovietized countries in ECE. The breakdown of the "national-accommodative" communist dictatorships in Poland and Hungary had a significant influence on the collapse of the "welfare" communist dictatorships in East Germany and Czechoslovakia. In particular, the opening of the border with Austria, which represented the first breach in the Iron Curtain, destabilized these regimes and precipitated their collapse.

Structural Factors

Economic Failure

During the 1980s, Hungary was perceived by many informed observers as the "happiest barrack" in the communist camp. Such an assertion was prompted especially by the economic strategies devised by the regime beginning in the 1960s in order to stir

economic development and ensure social quiescence. Consequently, Hungary did not experience the type of "pulsations" in economy and politics discussed above in the case of Poland. As illustrated in the previous chapter, in Poland the first three cycles of investment, i.e., 1949–57, 1958–71, 1972–82, ended with outbursts of social discontent and provoked major political crises. The fourth and last cycle, 1983–88, ended with a crisis that contributed to the initiation of the Polish "negotiated revolution" of 1989. Communist Hungary also went through a series of cycles of investment but, as compared to Poland, did not experience similar recurrent waves of violent protests from below which triggered political changes at the top of the party. The Hungarian Revolution of 1956 was an event of such major significance that at the level of the ruling elite the vision of a Hungarian "path to socialism" was definitely amended after 1956.

The issue of cycles of investment in the postwar Hungarian economy deserves further discussion. Scholarly literature on communist Hungary identifies a series of seven "macrocycles:" (1) 1945–52; (2) 1953–58; (3) 1959–65; (4) 1966–72; (5) 1973–79; (6) 1980–86; and (7) 1987–94. These seven cycles, the argument further reads, can be divided into four odd-numbered cycles and three even-numbered ones. The four odd-numbered cycles, i.e., (1) 1945–52; (3) 1959–65; (5) 1973–79; and (7) 1987–94, were inaugurated by periods of political mobilization and intensified development and ended with periods in which growth rates declined and pressure from below increased. The seventh cycle was initiated under state socialism but ended in post-communism. As for the even-numbered cycles, i.e., (2) 1953–58; (4) 1966–72; and (6) 1980–86, they were characterized by higher consumption and efforts to consolidate the achievements made during the previous, odd-numbered cycle of mobilization and growth.¹ Bearing in mind the cycles of investment presented above, let us

turn to the economic policies devised by the communist regime in Hungary from its inception to its collapse.

Hungary suffered severely in terms of material and human losses in the final stage of World War II. Alongside Germany, Poland, Yugoslavia and the Soviet Union, Hungary was among the countries that suffered the most during the war in Europe.² In the aftermath of the war, centrally planned economic development in Hungary was initiated by the First Three-Year Plan 1947–49, which was followed by the First Five-Year Plan (FYP) 1950–54.³ Nationalization of the main sectors of the economy such as industry, transport and commerce was carried out during this First Three-Year Plan and was completed by 1949. The First Three-Year Plan 1947–49 inaugurated a period of fundamental structural changes in the Hungarian economy in conformity with the Stalinist economic model. During this period, as László Kontler notes, the regime devised the “entirely unreasonable project of transforming Hungary, whose mineral resources are insignificant, into a ‘country of iron and steel.’”⁴ As a consequence, the country’s industry relied on imports for some 80 percent of the iron ore and over 90 percent of the coking coal it required.⁵

According to Tóké, the economic strategy of the Hungarian Workers Party (HWP) headed by Mátyás Rákosi concentrated on the fulfillment of three major goals: (1) industrialization; (2) liquidation of backwardness in agriculture; and (3) a 50 percent increase in the living standard of the population.⁶ To reach these goals, the regime decided to allot a large share of the national income to the development of industrial branches. The highest level of economic mobilization was attained during the First FYP 1950–54, when the Hungarian communists allotted to heavy industry the largest share of the investment committed to all industrial branches, namely 92.1 percent, as compared to Bulgaria (83.5 percent); Romania (82.6 percent); Czechoslovakia (78.1 percent); East Germany (75.2 percent); and Poland (75.0 percent).

During the First FYP, Hungary allotted 25.2 percent of its national income to investments. For comparison, Czechoslovakia allotted only 22.3 percent of its national income to investments (First FYP); Poland allotted 21.6 percent (Six-Year Plan); and Bulgaria 19.6 percent (First FYP).⁷ Liquidation of backwardness in agriculture signified throughout Sovietized ECE the accomplishment of collectivization. On 17 March 1945, the Provisional Government in Hungary adopted a land reform which had far-reaching economic and social effects. This reform targeted 8 million acres, which represented some 35 percent of the total arable land. Of this area, some 40 percent became state property, while the remaining 60 percent was distributed among 640,000 families.⁸ The reform was carried out during the period 1945–46 and was conducted by the sitting minister of agriculture, Imre Nagy.

Hungary was submitted to the same type of “revolution from above,” which represented an integral part of the Sovietization process. This “second revolution” envisaged, apart from the massive investment in industry, the establishment of collective farms and the destruction of the kulaks as a class. The collectivization process was forcefully implemented beginning in August 1948, but was reversed for a period due to the New Course policies of Nagy, who became deputy prime minister in 1952. In the aftermath of Stalin’s death, Nagy was named prime minister, a position he occupied from July 1953 to April 1955.⁹ As for the 50 percent rise in the living standard of the population, the regime eventually realized that the task could not be easily achieved. By 1956, the policy of forced industrial development implemented during the First FYP produced significant imbalances in the economy, which led not to an increase, but to a lowering of the standard of living. As György E. Enyedi and György R. Ránki observe, “the economic policy deliberately exploited agriculture in favor of heavy industry,”

and this led to food shortages and progressive decline of the agricultural sector.¹⁰

The First FYP 1950–54 put a major burden on the Hungarian economy, especially because of the structural imbalance it created. Furthermore, the First FYP came to an end in a period of growing political, social and economic problems. Thus, the adoption of a new FYP was delayed and until 1957 the economy was conducted in accordance with annual plans.¹¹ The Hungarian revolution of October 1956 put an end to the period of intense mobilization in the name of building a new society. The new leader, János Kádár, made clear his option for gradual change. Beginning in 1958, the regime implemented two national economic plans, a second Three Year Plan 1958–60 and a second FYP 1961–65.¹² With regard to agriculture, in July 1957 the regime launched the Agrarian Theses, which harbingered a new collectivization campaign. Although the collectivization drive was slowed down after 1960, when Kádár adopted a milder approach to agricultural problems, in February 1961 the regime was able to announce that the “socialist cooperative sector” comprised already 75 percent of Hungary’s arable land.¹³

As previously mentioned, a fundamental characteristic of state socialist economies is that the decision of channeling investment towards the producer or consumer goods sectors is essentially political. Consequently, producer goods sectors were favored by the central planners throughout ECE. In addition, as economist János Kornai aptly illustrates, a main deficiency of the command economies was their rigidity: central planners reacted slowly to rapid changes in supply or demand.¹⁴ In the aftermath of the 1956 revolution, the Kádár regime engaged in a policy of selective industrial development, which meant in fact a prudent continuation of the industrialization drive. By the mid-1960s, however, the Hungarian economy began to slow down. For instance, the national income grew by an average annual rate of

4.1 percent during the Second FYP 1961–65, as compared to an average annual growth rate of 6.0 percent during the period 1956–60.¹⁵ Nevertheless, the Kádár regime had a fundamental legitimacy problem: it had been brought to power through the second Soviet intervention, which crushed the revolution and removed from power the legitimate government led by Prime Minister Nagy. The execution of the leader of the Hungarian revolution on 16 June 1958 only added to the legitimacy problem of the new leadership. In such a situation, Kádár and his power elite aimed at acquiring “legitimation through consumption.” Consequently, the power elite in Budapest decided to engage in a systemic change.

Some authors have argued that the move towards introducing economic reforms was harbingered by the appointment of Rezső Nyers as candidate member of the Politburo and secretary of the CC in charge of economic policy at the Eighth Congress of the Hungarian Socialist Workers Party (HSWP) in November 1962. Debates within the CC of the HSWP lasted from November 1965 until May 1966, when the economic reform package, known as the New Economic Mechanism (NEM), was approved.¹⁶ This coincided with the launch of the Third FYP 1966–70.¹⁷ The reform package was eventually introduced on 1 January 1968. Kornai notes that the Hungarian reform, which consisted in the “radical abolition of short-term mandatory planning,” proved its viability in spite of a partially developed market mechanism.¹⁸ In a similar vein, Tókécs affirms: “The inauguration of the NEM was by far the most important policy decision made by the Kádár regime during its thirty-three-year reign in Hungary. The NEM unleashed a wide array of thitherto latent political and social forces and also set in motion a process of complex systemic change that the regime could neither foresee or control.”¹⁹ Thus, it may be argued that the NEM favored the process of institutional devolution and forced the state-owned firms to become more flexible and adaptive.

Over the period 1971–89, the Hungarian economy was conducted in accordance with another four FYPs: the Fourth FYP 1971–75, Fifth FYP 1976–80, Sixth FYP 1981–85 and Seventh FYP 1986–90 (which came to an end in 1989).²⁰ The fate of the economic reforms package, however, was decided not only on purely economic grounds, but also in accordance with domestic, as well as Soviet-bloc, politics. Following Tőkés, the interval 1968–88, from the initiation of the NEM up to the ousting of Kádár from power, can be divided into three periods, as follows: bold reforms, 1968–72; counter-reforms, 1972–78; and improvisatory reforms, from 1978 onwards.²¹ The period of bold reforms coincided with the first phase of the NEM that came to an end in 1972 because of combined pressure from the party apparatus, which was experiencing a loss of its status in face of the state administration, and from the Soviet Union and some “fraternal” countries such as East Germany, Czechoslovakia and Bulgaria, which objected mostly on ideological grounds. In May 1972, Kádár offered his resignation to the Politburo of the HSWP but, not unexpectedly, he was unanimously asked to remain in power. The NEM was suspended following a decision of a CC plenum, which took place on 14–15 November 1972.²²

The ensuing period was characterized by a series of counter-reforms, which were implemented more vigorously over the interval 1972–75 and aimed at restoring the authority of the apparatchiks over non-party technocrats. All in all, the period of obstructing the economic reform program lasted until 1978. Economic difficulties continued to accumulate and thus, in February 1978, the regime decided to reduce the pressure on the economy by legally recognizing the “second economy.” Although private enterprise did develop in Hungary – by 1985 there were some 140,000 artisans and 30,000 small businesses, involving around two-thirds of the population – the “second economy” could not solve the growing economic difficulties of the country. By the early 1980s, the performance of the economy diminished significantly. In 1982, Hungary attained

a state of near insolvency and it was saved by a loan from the International Monetary Fund (IMF).²³

In spite of these difficulties, the Kádár regime continued its pro-consumption economic policy by borrowing heavily from the West. Thus, between 1984 and 1987, the country’s foreign debt rose from USD 8.8 billion to USD 17.7 billion.²⁴ Nevertheless, it was not absolute deprivation that determined the fall of the regime in 1989. As already mentioned, the Hungarians were better off than people in the other “fraternal” countries. Although the economic reforms did not succeed in macroeconomic terms, they did develop an incipient enterprise culture among the population. Hungarians engaged in supplementary working hours in the “second economy” in addition to the job they had in the “first economy” and thus earned, and subsequently spent, more money.²⁵ As Kontler observes, the Kádár regime managed “to win the acceptance of most, though the devotion of relatively few, Hungarians by benefits that were not available for the citizens of other countries in the Soviet bloc.”²⁶ As we have seen, however, such a consumption-oriented economic policy led on the long term to economic stagnation and debt accumulation. Nevertheless, it was relative deprivation that played an important role in the development of discontent. The opening towards the affluent West and the relative dissatisfaction of both softliners within the party and the general public, who wanted to achieve the wealth and efficiency of Western societies, made the Hungarian “negotiated revolution” possible.

Ideological Decay

Hungary went through two experiments aimed at radically transforming society in accordance with Marxist-Leninist ideological tenets: the short-lived 1919 Soviet Republic of Béla Kun, and the Stalinist regime of Mátyás Rákosi (1948–56). The “revolution from

above” carried out by the Rákosi regime received a definitive blow in 1956. In only two weeks, 23 October–4 November, the “socialist order” in Hungary simply collapsed. During the days of the revolution, the legitimate government of Hungary led by Prime Minister Nagy decided to return to a multiparty system, declared the neutrality of Hungary and its subsequent withdrawal from the Warsaw Treaty Organization. Numerous scholars have sought to identify the ideological profile of Nagy. Was he a Marxist-Leninist, a national-communist, a reform communist, a socialist with a human face or a Eurocommunist? In this respect, István Rév notes that “the martyr-prime minister ... died as a communist, as a naïve believer in the reformability of the state-socialist system.”²⁷ Such debates are surely crucial in shedding light on an important chapter of Hungarian recent history. Whatever his political beliefs and ideological commitments, what is significant for the present analysis is that Nagy was the central figure of the October 1956 revolution in Hungary, who acted in good faith and died with dignity. At the same time, The Hungarian revolution showed to the world that communist rule in the Soviet bloc was not indestructible and that political leaders had to make the right choice when asked to decide between subjugation and freedom. As János M. Rainer points out: “A consensus has prevailed with regard to Nagy’s ethical position ever since the time of Nagy’s death. The meaning of that death has not been questioned by anything that may have been discovered about Nagy’s life.”²⁸

The anti-communist revolution which Hungary experienced in 1956 was followed in a rapid sequence by a communist counter-revolution. In the midst of these bloody events, the Hungarian Workers Party, which had been established in 1948 and carried out the Stalinist “revolution from above,” dissolved itself and a new party, the Hungarian Socialist Workers Party, was established. Once the revolution was suppressed, the Kádár regime had to institutionalize the newly born party and fight a political struggle “on two fronts.” On the one hand, the traditional Stalinist

symbolism regarding the communist party’s mission to build a utopian new society had to be abandoned. On the other hand, total silence had to be kept on the true meaning of 1956. What resulted from this struggle “on two fronts” was that ideology ceased to be a driving force in the regime’s relationship with Hungarian society. This does not mean that the power elite ceased to pay lip service to the ideological foundations of the regime. On the contrary, Marxist-Leninist propaganda continued to be delivered to the masses wrapped in the “impeccably orthodox rhetoric of the political leadership.”²⁹ At the same time, the regime skillfully utilized the issue of stability and economic performance in order to avoid a new 1956-like trauma and to pursue consensus. This is why the Hungarian communist regime had to break with economic Stalinism and engage in an accentuated pro-consumption policy, an economic policy it constantly supported until its demise in 1989. Writing about Hungarian society in the late 1970s, Kornai perceptively observes: “In Hungary, 20–25 years after a defeated revolution, the attention of the leading stratum and the millions of ordinary people turned not towards strikes and political struggles, but calmly towards economy. Ordinary people chased around after extra earnings, built houses and grew vegetables.”³⁰

As shown above, the ideological basis of the Kádár regime was not the struggle for communism or other similar utopian pretensions, but a fragile political consensus rooted in pro-consumption policies. The economic stagnation in the 1980s, however, provoked increased dissatisfaction with the regime. According to Kontler: “During the second half of the 1980s, many of the two-thirds of Hungarian society who did supplementary work soon began to feel that the sacrifices they were making were grossly disproportionate with the rewards that accrued to them.”³¹ Such a widespread feeling led to the termination of the tacit deal offered by the Kádár regime to Hungarian society in the aftermath of the 1956 revolution.³²

Conjunctural Factors

In the case of communist Hungary, like in that of Poland, external conjuncture played a significant role in the initiation of the “negotiated revolution.” Two factors had a particular influence upon the unfolding of events: (1) the “Gorbachev factor;” and (2) the “snowballing effect.” Gorbachev’s coming to power in the Soviet Union and his subsequent renunciation of the Brezhnev Doctrine had a direct effect on all ruling elites of the Sovietized countries in ECE, but in different ways. In Hungary, the reforms initiated by Gorbachev contributed to the undermining of the Kádár regime by changing popular perceptions towards “goulash-communism.” As Kontler observes: “Kádár, the one-time pioneer of reforms in the Soviet bloc, was deeply disturbed by the aspirations of Gorbachev, for they now made virtually any depth of reform possible, whereas the ones effected up to 1985 were the maximum he was willing to concede.”³³ In the late 1980s, Hungary was still the “happiest barrack” in the Soviet camp, but the political changes in the Soviet Union were putting additional pressure on the power elite in Budapest.

Apart from the changes in Moscow, there was another factor that influenced the decisions made by the ruling elites and opposition groups throughout ECE in 1989: the Polish example. The relegalization of Solidarity and the opening of roundtable talks between the regime and the opposition in Poland created a precedent and provided a practical model for the “negotiated revolution” in Hungary. With regard to the Polish model, János Kis, one of the most prominent dissidents in communist Hungary, notes: “Some experiences were necessary concerning the possibility of installing arrangements through negotiations. The idea had originated in the Polish opposition; it was Poland that had set the standard first in August 1980 and then in spring 1989.”³⁴ The Polish model, however, was also based on the cross-class alliance that gave birth to Solidarity, while in post-1956 Hungary the

strategy employed by dissident groups was centered on piecemeal achievements and avoidance of direct confrontation with the regime. It was the initial success of Solidarity in August 1980 that influenced the Hungarian intellectual opposition to become increasingly politicized afterwards.³⁵

In the Hungarian case, a series of additional external factors created a special context which enabled civic-oriented groups to mobilize and engage in public protests whose message, although not overtly political, became increasingly critical of the regime. These issues were: disarmament, protection of the environment and observance of minority rights. Of these issues, the second and the third aroused the greatest public interest and support, and thus had the highest potential for social mobilization. With regard to the issue of environmental protection, one of the most heated debates was provoked in the mid-1980s by the development of the project of the Gabčíkovo-Nagymaros dam on the Danube. Sanctioned by the Budapest Treaty of 16 September 1977, the project envisaged the construction of a hydroelectric power plant on the Danube as a joint project between Hungary and Czechoslovakia. The project aroused open protests from Hungarian environmentalists from the early 1980s onwards, when it became clear that the construction of the dam would endanger the ecosystem in that region in northwest Hungary. One of the most active civic organizations against this project was the Danube Circle (*Duna Kör*), which received the Alternative Nobel Prize in 1985. Having no explicit political goals, the protest over the environmental threat posed by the Gabčíkovo-Nagymaros dam received widespread popular support and, more importantly, signaled that the population was prepared to engage in mass protests on issues of public interest. For instance, on 2 September 1988 some 35,000 people demonstrated in Budapest against the project.³⁶

A second issue was the protection of the cultural identity of Hungarian minorities in neighboring countries – particularly in

Romania and Slovakia. The systematization of the territory and settlements launched by the supreme leader of the Romanian Communist Party, Ceaușescu, envisaged a significant reduction of the number of villages in Romania. Although Ceaușescu's unreasonable project was directed against Romanian villages as well, in Hungary the matter was perceived as targeting primarily the Hungarian-speaking population in Transylvania and aimed at liquidating the Hungarian villages in the region. Protests in Hungary intensified from the mid-1980s onwards, and reached their peak during 1988. Thus, on 27 June 1988, several independent groups organized a large demonstration in Budapest, protesting against the Romanian plans of rural resettlement. At the time, Radio Free Europe reported that between 30,000 and 100,000 individuals took part in the event and stated that it was "the biggest independent demonstration since the 1956 revolution and the largest ever in one East European communist country against the policies of another."³⁷ It is also worth noting that the issue of protecting the rights of the Hungarian minorities in neighboring countries contributed to the devising of a common platform between the (liberal) democratic opposition and populist dissent in Hungary. Such a platform permitted the development of a more structured opposition towards the regime in 1988–89.

Nation-Specific Factors

The present work focuses on political cultures at both regime and community levels in order to explain the particular developments throughout the communist period in Hungary and especially during the "miraculous year" 1989. In terms of political cultures, however, two perspectives should be considered. First, from the perspective of a longer historical duration, one should consider what Tókéš has named Hungary's "survivalist political culture."

As he points out: "The elites' pragmatic mindset and, when all else failed, willingness to come to terms with adversity were rooted in the similarly pragmatic, perhaps fatalistic, values of Hungary's traditional peasant society."³⁸ Second, from the perspective of a shorter historical duration, one should take into account the identity-shaping experiences of the Hungarian communist elites from 1919 onwards. Some important figures of the Rákosi regime went through a process of political socialization during the short-lived dictatorship of the proletariat imposed during the Councils' Republic. In fact, the Hungarian Councils' Republic (21 March–1 August 1919) was a 133-day-long experiment in state socialism which came to an end because of foreign military intervention.³⁹ A second failure of a dictatorship of the proletariat in Hungary occurred in 1956. The 1956 collapse of Stalinist rule in Hungary was an event of prime importance, which decisively shaped both regime and community political cultures and signaled a return to "survivalist" policies based on consensus-seeking and avoidance of open conflict. Considering the impact of the Hungarian revolution at both regime and community levels, this section concentrates on the two varieties of political culture only after this moment of rupture.

The impact of the October 1956 revolution on the political culture of Hungarian communism and the political cultures of resistance deserves further discussion. The Hungarian revolution contributed decisively to the development of set of attitudinal and behavioral patterns at both regime and community levels, which in turn influenced significantly the way the Hungarian "negotiated revolution" of 1989 unfolded. In this respect, the case of Hungary resembles that of communist Poland in the sense that a significant event or series of events provoked a shift in terms of political cultures. As shown above, in the case of Poland it was a matter of a succession of events during the period August 1980–December 1981 that shaped both regime and community political cultures.

At community level, the political cultures of resistance were transformed with the birth of Solidarity: the newly born independent trade union adopted a political strategy centered on self-restraint, which ultimately made possible the 1989 “strategic compromise” with the regime. At regime level, the coming to the fore of the “military party” and the imposition of Martial Law in December 1981 provoked a shift in the political culture of Polish communism. Through concentration of power in the hands of the supreme leader of the PUWP, General Jaruzelski, the new regime departed from the factionalism which had characterized the political culture of Polish communism in the post-Bierut era. Paradoxically, this particular feature eased the way towards a regime change in Poland once the Jaruzelsky regime decided to open talks with Solidarity in January 1989.

In Hungary, it was not a succession of events but a single event of paramount importance that shaped both regime and community political cultures in the direction of adopting an evolutionary political strategy: the revolution of October–November 1956. To be sure, a comprehensive analysis of the Hungarian revolution would far exceed the limits of this work. Some details are nonetheless necessary in order to support the argument put forward in this chapter. The explanatory model that forms the basis of the present analysis can be also applied to explain the outbreak, unfolding and outcome of the 1956 revolution. Accordingly, the sparking of the 1956 revolution can be explained by identifying a series of structural, conjunctural and nation-specific factors and analyzing the way they aggregated. According to Litván, a revolutionary process unfolded in Hungary during the period 1953–56, which can be divided into four stages: (1) development of the reform movement, spring 1953–autumn 1956; (2) students’ mobilization and demands for radical reforms, culminating with the initiation of the demonstration of 23 October; (3) the Hungarian Revolution, 23 October–4 November; and (4) societal

resistance against the Kádár restoration, 4 November up to the end of 1956.⁴⁰

Let us discuss briefly the combination of structural, conjunctural and nation-specific factors that led to the outbreak of the Hungarian Revolution of 1956. The structural factors are related to economic and ideological issues. As shown above, in the economy, “revolution from above” on the Stalinist model was initiated through a first Three-Year Plan 1947–49 and a FYP 1950–54. The main sectors of the economy were nationalized by 1949 and Hungary underwent a process of forced industrialization. In spite of the lack of mineral resources, the HWP wanted to transform Hungary into a “country of iron and steel.” Thus, during the First FYP, 92.1 percent of the total investments were directed towards the development of heavy industry. Another dimension of Rákosi’s “revolution from above” was the forceful collectivization of agriculture, which was started in August 1948. The heavy social costs of the rapid industrialization were supported by the population, and by 1956 social dissatisfaction was on the rise. In ideological terms, one can argue that the HWP benefited from some popular support triggered by diffuse hopes that, under Soviet protection, it might recover some of the territories and populations lost in the aftermath of World War I. By the mid-1950s, however, it had become clear that the incompetent policies of Rákosi and his team had led neither to the recovery of these losses, nor to economic improvement. Rákosi’s subservience to the Kremlin did not result in a reversal of the situation created by the post-World War I settlements and confirmed in the aftermath of World War II. According to Litván: “In 1945, Hungary was virtually the only state among the intended allies whose communist leaders did not bring any ‘wedding gift’ from Moscow, unlike Poland which was given lands at the expense of Germany, or the Romanians who were given control of Transylvania.”⁴¹

In terms of international conjuncture, an element of prime importance was Khrushchev's de-Stalinization, which opened a new chapter in the history of communist regimes and had a particular influence on Sovietized Europe. Moreover, Khrushchev's condemnation of Stalin's crimes against the party apparatus had a particular influence on the "fraternal" regimes in Poland and Hungary. As already discussed, in the Polish city of Poznań there took place on 28 June 1956 the first major working-class uprising under communist rule in that country, which the regime suppressed ruthlessly. This outburst of social discontent deepened the divisions within the party and eventually led to the so-called Polish October, i.e., the return of Gomułka to the highest position in the party hierarchy during the Plenary Meeting of the PUWP held on 19–21 October. The 1956 events in Poland, which shortly preceded the Hungarian revolution, had an appreciable impact on the emergence of overt requests for intellectual freedom and reforms in Hungary. Paul Lendvai goes even further and argues that in the Hungarian context the "demonstrations of sympathy with Poland on 23 October 1956 turned out to be a direct prelude to revolution."⁴² The international context in which the Hungarian revolution broke out deserves further discussion. On 15 May 1955, the Austrian State Treaty was signed and thus Austria became an independent state, which enjoyed a neutral status. In fact, this event took place just after the establishment of the WTO on 14 May. As shown below, the fact that the Soviets agreed to withdraw their troops from Austria influenced the political decisions taken by the revolutionary government in Hungary.⁴³

As for the nation-specific factors, the division of the power elite between the Stalinist faction led by Rákosi and the revisionist faction whose most prominent figure was Nagy determined a shift in political culture. This split at the top deserves further discussion, since it was a matter of a rift that emerged between members of the same "Muscovite" group which had been brought to power

by the Red Army in the aftermath of World War II, and not between "native" and "Muscovite" militants, as occurred in other communist parties in Sovietized ECE. Let us examine briefly some of the main issues related to the communist takeover and the subsequent imposition of the Stalinist regime in Hungary. The "home grown" Hungarian communists emerged from underground in the fall of 1944, while Soviet troops were advancing into Hungarian territory. At the same time, the "Muscovite" group of communist militants who had sought refuge in the Soviet Union during the war returned to Hungary in October 1944 in order to reorganize the party in the eastern parts of the country, which were already under the control of the Red Army. Among them were those who would constitute the inner circle of power during the period of Hungarian Stalinism: Ernő Gerő, József Révai, Mihály Farkas, Imre Nagy and Zoltán Vas. Mátyás Rákosi, who was the undisputed leader of the "Muscovite" group and Stalin's favorite, returned from Moscow in January 1945.⁴⁴

Democratic interwar parties, such as the Independent Smallholders' Party–ISP (*Független Kisgazdapárt*–FKGP), the Hungarian Social Democratic Party–HSDP (*Magyarországi Szociáldemokrata Párt*–MSZDP) and the National Peasant Party–NPP (*Nemzeti Parasztpárt*–NPP) also resumed activity and started to reorganize. The Hungarian Communist Party–HCP (*Magyar Kommunista Párt*–MKP) had between 2,000 and 3,000 members in 1944, but its membership rose rapidly to some 150,000 members at the time of the first national conference of the party and reached around 500,000 by the time of the elections of November 1945.⁴⁵ However, the HCP did not manage to win the elections of 4 November 1945. Instead, the ISP won 57 percent of the vote, the HSDP received 17.4 percent, while the HCP gathered only 17 percent.⁴⁶ Consequently, the government was formed by the ISP. Not long after their defeat, on 5 March 1946,

the HCP founded the Left Wing Bloc together with the HSDP and NPP. In order to expand their power base and undermine their political opponents, the Hungarian communists applied what Rákosi has called “salami tactics.” Such tactics involved a piecemeal process of provoking internal divisions and undermining their political enemies in all possible ways, while expanding the HCP’s political power base. As a consequence, in the elections of 31 August 1947 the HCP received, according to the official figures, 22.3 percent of the vote, while the entire Left Wing Bloc (HCP–HSDP–NPP) won 45.4 percent.⁴⁷

In the fall of 1947, however, the rupture between the wartime allies became irreversible. Harbingered by Winston Churchill’s “Iron Curtain speech,” which the former British prime minister delivered in March 1946 at Westminster College in Fulton, Missouri, the division of Europe and the world was officially recognized by the Soviets in September 1947. As a reaction to the Truman Doctrine and the Marshall Plan, the Soviet Union established the Communist Information Bureau (Cominform). The decision was made at a conference held on 22–27 September, in the town of Szklarska Poręba in Lower Silesia, Poland. On that occasion, the head of the Soviet delegation, Andrei A. Zhdanov, put forward his “two camp thesis,” stating that a “democratic” camp led by the USSR was confronted by an “imperialistic” one headed by the US.⁴⁸ In such a rapidly changing international context, the Soviet-backed communist parties in ECE pushed for an acceleration of the processes of power seizure. In Hungary, Rákosi’s “salami tactics” involved the unmasking of the alleged “reactionary” and “conspiratorial” politics of the political opposition followed by harassment and arrests of their members and sympathizers, as well as the taming of the Catholic Church, whose head, Cardinal József Mindszenty, was particularly critical towards the “Marxist evil.”⁴⁹ The HCP merged with the HSDP on 12 June 1948, and the party which resulted from the merger

was named the Hungarian Workers Party–HWP (*Magyar Dolgozók Pártja*–MDP). According to Bennett Kovrig, the newly born HWP numbered 1,128,130 members.⁵⁰ The year 1948 has been known since as “the year of the turning point” due to its twofold significance: it marked the end of the frail postwar democratic system and the establishment of the dictatorship of the proletariat. Finally, what remained of the imperfect though democratic multiparty system established in Hungary in the aftermath of World War II was dismantled through a return to “popular front” tactics. Accordingly, on 1 February 1949 the Hungarian Independent Popular Front was established. Alongside the HWP, this political organization gathered the remnants of the political parties which had not been dissolved yet.⁵¹ The communist takeover was accomplished after the elections held on 15 May 1949, in which the Front received 96.27 percent of the vote.⁵²

Looking retrospectively, three main figures of Hungarian communism in the post-World War II period deserve particular attention: Mátyás Rákosi, Imre Nagy and János Kádár. This section addresses the political visions of Rákosi and Nagy, while Kádár’s political ideas and leadership style are addressed below in the section focusing on regime political culture during the period 1956–89. Rákosi was the most prominent figure of the “Muscovite” group which returned from the Soviet Union in order to reorganize the party after the underground, wartime years. That he was considered important for Hungary’s Stalinization may be grasped from the fact that for reasons of both personal safety and political strategy he was not sent back home with the first group of militants led by Gerő in October 1944, but returned only in January 1945 to become the Hungarian Stalin. Nagy was not part of the Hungarian communist elite in Moscow. A specialist in agrarian policies, he was, as Rainer aptly observes, “on the borderline between a functionary and a party intellectual, but closer to the latter.”⁵³ After his return from Moscow, Nagy became a

member of the Hungarian government, first as minister of agriculture in the Provisional Government (until November 1945) and subsequently as minister of the interior (until February 1946). After his dismissal in early 1946, he rose to prominence again in 1952, when he was appointed deputy prime minister. As Rainer further points out, Nagy took a rather “doctrinaire functionary approach” to the Sovietization of Hungary, sought a gradual systemic transformation and tended to avoid coercion and violence. Such an attitude provoked his temporary demotion.⁵⁴

The divergent views on Hungary’s political development held by Rákosi and Nagy became evident during the New Course episode, which coincided with the period July 1953–April 1955, when Nagy occupied the position of prime minister. As first secretary of the HWP, Rákosi put constant pressure on Nagy, especially from December 1954 onwards. The CC of the HWP criticized Nagy’s alleged “right-wing, anti-Marxist, anti-party, opportunistic” opinions and eventually decided to remove him from high positions within the party and state apparatus in April 1955. András Hegedüs, a person trusted by Rákosi, then became prime minister. Although Rákosi’s maneuvers succeeded in ousting Nagy from power, the split at the level of the HWP power elite deepened. Thus, the reformist faction within the party was by 1956, as Litván puts it, “relatively homogenous and determined” and had a competent leader in Imre Nagy.⁵⁵ The temporary victory of Rákosi’s Stalinist faction received a major blow when Khrushchev delivered his “secret speech,” which announced the initiation of a de-Stalinization campaign. Rákosi was forced to engage in self-criticism and to confess to the abuses that had taken place under his rule. In March 1956 he admitted that the charges brought in 1949 against László Rajk, who had been accused of Titoism and of spying for the Western powers, were not real and that a show trial had been staged on that occasion. Subsequently, on 6 October

the same year, the regime organized a reburial of Rajk, which some 100,000 people attended. The presence of such a large crowd revealed the general dissatisfaction with the Stalinist faction in power. Before this event took place, though, Rákosi had to resign in July 1956 from his position as first secretary of the HWP due to Soviet pressure. Rákosi was replaced by his fellow from the “Muscovite” group, Gerő.⁵⁶

At community level, mobilization was on the rise beginning in 1955, in the context of Nagy’s New Course policies. The most active were student and intellectual circles. The Petőfi Circle was founded in March 1955, and became a prominent place for debates on social and political issues, especially after Khrushchev launched his de-Stalinization campaign. In June 1956, for instance, a debate organized in Budapest by this circle gathered some 6,000 people.⁵⁷ Student activism culminated during the month of October 1956 with a series of meetings held on 22 October in Budapest, during which a list of student demands, known as the “sixteen points,” was drafted. At the same time, there were clear signs that the urban population had a poor perception of the performance of the ruling Stalinist faction.

The aggregation of the factors presented above took place in the particular context of the unprecedented changes which occurred in Poland in October 1956. In many respects, Gomułka’s return to power inspired many of those who were asking for the introduction of reforms in Hungary. The Polish example gave hopes to those who expected a reform-minded figure such as Nagy to make a comeback to power, all the more so as his reformist program had many points in common with Gomułka’s “Polish road to socialism.” The revolution, however, was sparked by a student manifestation organized in Budapest on 23 October 1956. Participants coming from both Buda and Pest sides of the city met at the statue of Józef Bem, a Polish general who led the Hungarian revolutionary forces in the 1848–49 battles against the Habsburgs. The group

coming from the Pest side gathered first at the statue of the national poet and hero of the 1848 Hungarian revolution, Sándor Petőfi, and subsequently crossed the river and marched towards the statue of General Bem, where they arrived at around 15:00 hours. From that moment on, the events unfolded very rapidly and took a completely unexpected course. Some two hours later, demonstrators gathered on the other side of the Danube, in front of the historic building of the Hungarian Parliament, in Kossuth Lajos Square. Simultaneously, other groups moved towards the building of the Hungarian Radio, from where representatives of the student assemblies intended to broadcast their “sixteen points,” i.e., the list of demands put forward the day before, 22 October 1956.

Nagy was outside Budapest and returned to the city only in the morning of 23 October. That day in the evening, he was asked to speak to the crowds which were waiting for him in front of the Parliament. Nagy delivered a speech at around 21:00 hours in an attempt at appeasing the crowds, but his discourse did not convince the demonstrators to renounce their protest. During the night of 23 to 24 October 1956, the protest turned violent and a revolutionary situation developed rapidly. Revolutionaries assaulted the Hungarian Radio and shots were fired from both sides, the guardians of the building and the insurgents.⁵⁸ Some authors consider that the storming of the public radio marked the beginning of the armed revolt.⁵⁹ After the revolutionaries entered the public radio, the “sixteen points” were finally broadcast. As one among these referred to the removal of Stalin’s statue, angry crowds headed towards it and tore it down, so that only a pair of giant boots remained on the pedestal as a reminder of the personality cult of the Soviet dictator.

The CC of the HWP operated some changes in order to bring the situation under control. In the morning of 24 October, Nagy was named prime minister, although the Stalinist Gerő kept his position as first secretary of the HWP. Early that morning, Soviet

troops had already started their first intervention meant to “pacify” Budapest. On 25 October, another major change was operated at the level of the Hungarian power elite: Gerő was replaced by Kádár, who belonged to the native communist elite and was perceived as a victim of the Rákosi epoch. Kádár had been arrested in April 1951 and sentenced in December 1952 to a life term in prison for his alleged “treasonable activities.” He had been released from prison in July 1954 in the context of the New Course politics and subsequently “rehabilitated.”⁶⁰ Initially, the communist party, represented by First Secretary Kádár, and the government, represented by Prime Minister Nagy, supported one another in the attempt to solve the revolutionary situation with domestic means. The revolution, however, had already spread to the rest of the country. As clashes between the authorities and the revolutionaries multiplied, the number of casualties was on the rise. The number of revolutionary committees and workers’ councils – the key grassroots institutions of the revolution – was growing rapidly throughout the country.

A new government, composed of less compromised communists, was announced on 27 October and put forward its main objectives the next day, 28 October. According to the scholarly literature on the issue, the political program of the new Nagy government represented a major turn in the unfolding of the revolution since it tried to accommodate the requests by revolutionaries with the general issue of Hungary’s political development. The following day, 29 October, the new government initiated talks on two crucial issues: the cease-fire and the withdrawal of the Soviet troops from Budapest. The latter was completed by 31 October, despite the fact that a crucial political decision was made on 30 October: the Nagy government announced the renunciation of single party rule in Hungary and the return to a multi-party system. As a consequence, several parties, banned since the communist takeover, were reestablished. The revival of political pluralism imposed also

the reorganization of the HWP. The Presidium of the HWP decided on 31 October to dissolve the party and to found a new one on the ruins of the old, named the Hungarian Socialist Workers Party–HSWP (*Magyar Szocialista Munkáspárt*–MSZMP).⁶¹ The situation in Hungary proved to be unique in the Soviet bloc in the sense that the party which had carried out the communist takeover was constrained to dissolve itself due to a revolutionary situation. From that moment on, the party and state politics in Hungary diverged irretrievably. At the state level, Nagy continued to work along the lines of the program announced on 28 October. At the party level, Kádár left for Moscow on 1 November in order to work closely with the Soviet leadership towards finding a solution to the Hungarian crisis.

On the same day, the Soviet troops moved again in the direction of the Hungarian capital as part of their preparations for a military intervention. At the official demand of Prime Minister Nagy for an explanation regarding the increased Soviet military presence in the country and the advance of Soviet troops towards the capital city, the Soviet ambassador to Budapest, Yury V. Andropov, could not provide a satisfactory answer.⁶² Consequently, the Hungarian government issued an official statement by which it announced that Hungary decided to: (1) withdraw from the Warsaw Treaty Organization; and (2) declare its neutrality. In addition, the Nagy government appealed to the United Nations in order to support its legitimate decisions. At the moment when this official statement was issued, it was obvious that a process of establishing a democratic political order in Hungary was well under way. The country was about to leave the communist camp, but the Kremlin was determined not to let this happen. On 4 November 1956, the Soviet troops initiated Operation Whirlwind, the second and decisive military intervention to repress the revolution. On that day, Budapest was attacked early in the morning and the activity of the Nagy government was brutally stopped. With Soviet support,

the Kádár regime was officially instated on 7 November. In spite of the overwhelming military force of the invasion troops, small groups of revolutionaries continued to engage in sporadic clashes with units of the Soviet army until the end of November 1956.⁶³

As shown above, it was only in Hungary that the party which had carried out the communist takeover with the support of the Soviet Union dissolved itself under out-of-party constraints and was reestablished under a different name, to be finally brought to power again by Soviet troops. Briefly put, only communist Hungary witnessed a communist “revolution from above” under the Stalinist rule of Rákosi and a communist counter-revolution, which ousted the legitimate Nagy government and replaced it with the Kádár regime. The particular experience of the bloody revolution of 1956 and the subsequent communist counter-revolution decisively shaped the political cultures at both regime and community levels in the post-1956 period and ultimately determined the nature of the 1989 revolution in Hungary. The following sections concentrate on the political culture of Hungarian communism and the political cultures of resistance in the post-1956 period in order to explain Hungary’s road to the “negotiated revolution” of 1989.

Regime Political Culture, 1956–89

To explain the timing and nature of the 1989 regime change in Hungary it is necessary to analyze the HSWP’s capacity of adopting the most appropriate policies to respond to internal or external constraints and ensure the continuity of its rule. In this respect, drawing on Miklós Molnár’s periodization, it is possible to identify four distinct periods of HSWP rule after November 1956 and up to the year 1989: (1) age of repression, 1956–63; (2) age of consolidation, 1963–68; (3) age of reforms, 1968–81; and (4) age

of decline, 1981–89.⁶⁴ At the same time, the fundamental role played by Kádár's vision of politics and his leadership style should not be neglected when analyzing the patterns of interaction between regime and society in post-1956 Hungary.⁶⁵ Consequently, the present work addresses the issues of regime political culture in communist Hungary by concentrating on the four distinct periods of HSWP rule presented above, while considering the changing leadership roles of the party's supreme leader. The following section addresses the way the regime political culture in communist Hungary evolved over the said four periods from selective repression to "repressive tolerance," to use Herbert Marcuse's words.

The period of repression was inaugurated by the second Soviet intervention of 4 November 1956 and came to an end on 21 March 1963 with the granting of a general amnesty for those still imprisoned for acts committed during the revolution. This period, which might be also termed as the period of communist restoration, was characterized by selective terror. Repression was carried out under the protection of Soviet troops, whose presence on Hungarian soil was officially recognized through an agreement ratified in Budapest on 27 May 1957.⁶⁶ Major figures of the Nagy government, freedom fighters or sympathizers of the revolution were hunted down, arrested and sentenced to different terms in prison or received the death penalty. It has been estimated that during the first three years of repression some 35,000 individuals faced legal action because of their involvement on the side of the revolutionary forces. Eventually, 26,000 individuals were effectively put on trial and 22,000 of them were given different sentences. As for the death penalties, 341 individuals were executed from December 1956 until the summer of 1961, of whom 229 were executed for their direct involvement in the 1956 revolution. Apart from this, some 13,000 individuals were sent to internment camps during the period 1957–60.⁶⁷ A most tragic event of this repressive

period was the secret trial of Nagy and his close associates. The trial began on 5 February 1958, was suspended after only two days, and was eventually finalized on 9–15 June. On 16 June 1958, Nagy and two of his collaborators, Miklós Gimes and Pál Maléter, were executed in Budapest.⁶⁸ Two other associates of Nagy had a similar tragic fate: József Szilágyi had been tried separately and executed on 22 April 1958, while Géza Losonczy committed suicide in prison. Once the nuclei of societal resistance against the communist counter-revolution were suppressed, the Kádár regime was faced with an even more pressing task: that of institutionalizing the newborn HSWP. In fact, what the counter-revolution managed to achieve in the first instance was to put in place a government fully-backed by the Soviets. It has even been affirmed that once brought to power by the Soviet troops, Kádár faced the difficult mission of "putting together a party to back up the existing government."⁶⁹ Thus, the task ahead of the Hungarian communist regime was to build a new political community in the aftermath of the defeated 1956 revolution. To accomplish such a task, however, it was compelled to "struggle on two fronts," as mentioned. This meant to reject simultaneously two powerful political legacies: that of Nagy's revisionism as well as that of Rákosi's Stalinism.⁷⁰ The Kádár regime managed to reach this objective during the following period, in which "goulash communism" took shape.

The Twenty-Second Congress of the CPSU in October 1961, which was attended by a Hungarian delegation headed by Kádár himself, provided the prologue for the shift to a new epoch in the history of HSWP. During this congress, Khrushchev launched a second campaign of de-Stalinization which led, as Martin Malia aptly observes, to the birth of a "culture of dissidence" in the Soviet Union.⁷¹ Back home, Kádár decided to take advantage of the second de-Stalinization wave unleashed in Moscow and turn it to his own benefit. Thus, he established a committee in charge of

assessing the abuses committed by the Rákosi regime against party members during the period 1949–56. Headed by Béla Biszku, the committee presented its findings at the meeting of the CC of the HSWP held on 14–15 August 1962. By adopting a Khrushchevite scenario, Kádár succeeded in consolidating his personal power and further taming the old Stalinist elite members, who were still influential within the party.⁷² The year 1962 also marked the replacement of the “Rákosi doctrine,” which maintained that “he who is not with us is against us,” with the “Kádár doctrine,” which turned the aforementioned phrase into “he who is not against us is with us.” This change of emphasis indicated that a new epoch was about to come.⁷³

After two partial amnesties, granted on 4 April 1959 and 1 April 1960, Kádár announced on 21 March 1963 a general amnesty for a majority of those imprisoned for their involvement on the side of the revolutionary forces in 1956. This decision marked the beginning of a new period, that of the consolidation of power. During this period, which lasted until 1968, the Kádár regime moved gradually towards a “soft dictatorship,” which was characterized primarily by a consensus-seeking and careful preparation of a set of economic reforms meant to improve the living standard of the population, ensure social stability and eventually achieve “legitimation through consumption.”⁷⁴ As shown above in the section on economic issues, the process of introducing the economic reforms package known since as the NEM was rather tortuous. At the same time, the Kádár regime maintained a policy of cautious subservience to the Kremlin, notwithstanding the change at the top of the CPSU, i.e., the ousting of Khrushchev and the rise to power of Brezhnev in October 1964.⁷⁵ Consequently, Hungary joined – albeit as a “reluctant ally” – the Soviet-led WTO invasion of Czechoslovakia on 21 August 1968, which put an end to the Prague Spring. With regard to the Hungarian participation to the suppression of the

Prague Spring, some authors have argued that one of the reasons for which Kádár eventually decided to support the military intervention in Czechoslovakia was his determination to shelter the domestic economic reform program, the NEM, from Soviet criticism. Tótkés, for instance, notes in this respect: “Kádár’s solidarity with Brezhnev bought him time to get on with the NEM and also kept the HSWP hardliners at bay for the next two to three years.”⁷⁶ With the introduction of the NEM on 1 January 1968, Hungary entered the next stage, that of reforms.

This new phase in the political development of the Kádár regime was characterized in terms of overall domestic political strategy as a period of consensus-building through economic prosperity, which the NEM was supposed to assure. However, the economic reforms were met with criticism from within the HSWP and the Soviet bloc, primarily from the Soviet Union. Thus, the first phase of the NEM ended in 1972. In a surprising political move, Kádár offered his resignation to the Politburo of the HSWP in May 1972. He was, nevertheless, reconfirmed as the first secretary of the party at a CC meeting in June the same year. By offering to resign and being subsequently unanimously asked to remain in power, Kádár managed to strengthen his position. At the same time, the bold economic reforms were stopped. Since economic difficulties accumulated over the period 1972–78, the regime decided in February 1978 to legalize the “second economy.” Obviously, this measure alone could not solve the economic problems of the country. Instead, it had a major, though unexpected effect on the political cultures of resistance. The regime did not realize, perhaps, that by allowing individual initiative to develop it would unleash social energies which would nurture independent initiatives by citizens and anti-regime attitudes at grassroots level. In this sense, the legalization of the “second economy” paved the way for the 1989 regime change.⁷⁷ The period of reforms came to an end in 1981–82, when it became clear that

the Kádár regime was not able anymore to sustain the tacit deal it had offered to Hungarian society at large, i.e., a certain degree of economic prosperity in exchange for political stability. In 1982, Hungary attained a state of near insolvency and was saved only by a loan from the IMF. This supports the assertion that the country had entered a new epoch, that of decline.⁷⁸

The present work considers regime political culture as the main element that determined the negotiated character of the 1989 revolution in Hungary. In this respect, it is important to note the shift which occurred due to the generational conflict at the level of the HSWP power elite during the period of decline 1981–89. This led to the coming to power of a reform-oriented leadership, which in turn made possible the negotiated solution that put an end to the communist rule in Hungary. Reflecting upon the “communist endgame” in Hungary, Molnár observes: “What led to the final crisis – slowly and by process of accumulation – was a transformation in the mentality and behaviour both within the communist elite and across the country, in society as a whole – two parallel and inextricably linked phenomena.”⁷⁹ The “negotiated revolution” in Hungary was made possible by the readiness of an “enlightened” faction of the HSWP to open negotiations with the democratic opposition with a view to a transition to a new political order. At the same time, one should mention that the changes at the level of the ruling elite did not take place overnight. In the early 1980s, the HSWP was confronted with a series of difficult problems of which economic stagnation and political succession at the top were particularly pressing. While the Hungarian economy was no longer able to sustain the tacit deal that formed the basis of Kádár’s “goulash communism,” the supreme leader of the HSWP turned seventy in May 1982 and his health was deteriorating. In spite of these accumulating problems, no major decisions regarding the restructuring of both

the “first economy” and the party were taken at the Thirteenth Congress of the HSWP, which took place on 25–28 March 1985.

In the context of the political reforms initiated by Gorbachev in the Soviet Union, cautious steps towards introducing the much-needed reforms concerning both the party and the state were taken from 1986 onwards. The process of political change gained momentum with the appointment of Károly Grósz as prime minister in July 1987. As head of government, Grósz initiated a program of “stabilization and renewal” and succeeded in introducing a set of economic reforms. By May 1988, a fierce power struggle was fought between the Kádárists and the supporters of the new prime minister at the level of the ruling elite. At stake was the very future of the party and its secretary general, Kádár. Eventually, Grósz’s allies consolidated their position within the party apparatus and thus at the Third Conference of the HSWP, held on 20–22 May 1988, Kádár was forced to resign from his position of secretary general of the party, while Grósz took over both positions of secretary general and prime minister.⁸⁰

The negotiated nature of the 1989 revolution in Hungary was determined by the rapid unfolding of events over the period May 1988–June 1989, i.e., from the fall of Kádár to the reburial of Nagy.⁸¹ With regard to the historic significance of Nagy’s reburial in the context of the 1989 regime change in Hungary, Rév argues: “Communism killed itself instead of letting the people do it themselves. There were no special dates that could be remembered as decisive in the course of political transformation. The only event that was, and still is, considered in a strange way as crucial was the reburial of the revolutionary prime minister Imre Nagy on 16 June 1989.”⁸² As shown above, external conjunctural factors, such as the political developments in Poland and the renunciation of the Brezhnev Doctrine by the Soviet Union, influenced the unfolding of events in Hungary. In fact, the representatives of the HSWP themselves referred to the Polish model when negotiations with

the opposition were initiated in the spring of 1989. Thus, György Fejti, the secretary of the CC of the HSWP who represented the regime at the negotiations with the opposition, stated: "The Polish Roundtable discussions serve as a model for us."⁸³ Nevertheless, domestic political initiatives were crucial. A major step forward in this respect was taken by the Grósz regime when it decided to allow the creation of "social groups for political purposes" from June 1988 onwards, which practically led to the emergence of a multiparty system in communist Hungary prior to the 1989 regime change.

In November 1988, Grósz decided to retain only the position of secretary general of the HSWP and promoted a younger and reform-oriented official, Miklós Németh, to premiership. The new prime minister soon devised a set of policies aimed at emancipating the government from party tutelage. At the same time, the dissolution of the Kádárist political order was accelerated by the initiation of a debate on the nature of the 1956 revolution. Apart from the tacit deal, a major element of the political culture of the Kádár regime was the official definition of 1956 as a "counter-revolution." Silence was adamantly kept on: (1) the meaning of the 1956 revolution; (2) the bloody suppression of the revolution, the communist counter-revolution and the Soviet occupation; and (3) the subsequent wave of retributions, which culminated with the 1958 execution of Nagy and his close collaborators. In 1989, Imre Pozsgay, a major figure of the power elite in Budapest, opened the debate on the nature of the 1956 events, thus challenging the official interpretation of the Kádár regime. Minister of state after Kádár's ousting, he bluntly declared in an interview for Hungarian radio on 27 January 1989 that what had happened in 1956 was not a "counter-revolution," as had previously been maintained, but a "popular uprising."⁸⁴ Apart from this radical change in the discursive realm, one could observe that the structuring of political opposition was well under way as early as 1988.⁸⁵ At the same

time, political competition within the party became visible in early 1989 and involved major figures of the Grósz regime such as: Grósz himself, as head of the party; Németh, as head of government; Nyers, as a party veteran who epitomized the spirit of the early economic reforms (the NEM); and Pozsgay, as an outspoken top political figure.

In terms of party politics, a major decision was made at a meeting of the CC of the HSWP, held on 10–11 February 1989. Apart from the polemics sparked by Pozsgay's statement on the nature of the 1956 events, the CC eventually decided to open officially the way for the establishment of a new political system in Hungary. This meant that the HSWP was considering the option of opening negotiations with the newly organized political opposition. The decision of opening negotiations with the political opposition, which had already structured itself by the end of 1988, essentially determined the negotiated nature of the 1989 regime change in Hungary. This was due to the revisionist political culture of the faction that took over the HSWP after Grósz's nomination as prime minister in July 1987. It is also true, and this is discussed below in the section on the political cultures of resistance in communist Hungary, that a negotiated solution would not have been reached in the absence of an articulated political opposition in early 1989. Finally, at a meeting of the CC of the HSWP held on 29 May 1989, Grósz announced that a Forum for National Reconciliation was about to take place,⁸⁶ by which he meant the initiation of roundtable talks with the political opposition. The negotiations took the form of a trilateral National Roundtable (NRT) that lasted from 13 June to 18 September 1989 and gathered representatives of: (1) the ruling HSWP; (2) the political opposition reunited under the umbrella of the Opposition Roundtable; and (3) social organizations originally established under the aegis of the HSWP, some of them still acting as its proxies.

The NRT was inaugurated in an incendiary atmosphere, generated by the above-mentioned reburial of Nagy and his close collaborators, and concluded with an agreement which set the “legal and political conditions for a peaceful transition” in Hungary.⁸⁷ As a consequence, the once almighty HSWP was dissolved on 7 October 1989 and reorganized immediately under a new name, the Hungarian Socialist Party (HSP). A revised Constitution was introduced the same month, and on 23 October 1989, on the anniversary of the 1956 revolution, the Republic of Hungary was proclaimed. The country was entering a new and democratic historical epoch. Such a political outcome would not have been possible in the absence of concerted political action on the part of the opposition, and therefore the next section addresses the issue of the political cultures of resistance in post-1956 Hungary in order to provide a complete image of the conditions that made the “negotiated revolution” possible.

Political Cultures of Resistance, 1956–89

The Hungarian Revolution of 1956 was an event of paramount importance, which essentially shaped not only the regime political culture, but also the political cultures of resistance. The rapid and radical break with the immediate Stalinist past operated by the revolution of 1956 significantly influenced subsequent political development at both regime and community levels in communist Hungary. The revolution managed to dismantle communist power in Hungary in an interval of only two weeks, but its suppression, carried out during the Soviet-backed counter-revolution, was also quick and cruel. As already mentioned, repression touched tens of thousands of individuals, of whom 229 were executed for their direct involvement in the revolution. In short, Hungary witnessed in October–November 1956 an anti-communist revolution and

a communist counter-revolution whose traumatic legacy affected both regime and society over the period 1956–89. At societal level, this traumatic legacy led to the development of a specific pattern of dissent. In the aftermath of repression, the political cultures of resistance were shaped by the idea of negotiation and gradual change. The main lesson the nuclei of political opposition learned from the 1956 revolution was, perhaps, that they had to be pragmatic and “self-limiting” in setting their political goals if they wanted to avoid bloodshed and external, i.e., Soviet, intervention. Over the period in which the Kádár regime consolidated its power base, i.e., 1963–68, a tacit deal stayed at the basis of the regime–society relationship. Political stability in exchange for social benefits and economic prosperity, this was the essence of Kádár’s “goulash communism.” Once reforms were launched in 1968, Hungarian society was offered an “experiment of limited pluralism.” Such an experiment was based, as János Kis aptly puts it, on what he calls an “unwritten social contract,” i.e., a “deal of leaving politics and social control to the nomenklatura in exchange for receiving a tolerable margin experiment in the private sphere.”⁸⁸ The year 1968 was not only the year of the NEM, but also that of the Prague Spring and its suppression. Since Hungary took part in the military intervention in Czechoslovakia, this led to an acceleration of the process of ideological decay and to the adoption of more radical anti-regime stances by cultural intelligentsia. From 1968 onwards, the Hungarian democratic opposition took shape gradually, based on the principle of piecemeal achievements and the idea of continuous bargaining in terms of what was tolerated by the regime and what was not.

A particular aspect of what this work has termed the political cultures of resistance in communist Hungary is that the various parties and groups belonging to the political opposition managed to hold their own roundtable talks prior to the negotiations with the ruling HSWP and its satellites in the trilateral National

Roundtable (NRT) talks. The Opposition Roundtable–ORT (*Ellenzéki Kerekasztal*–EKA) gathered nine organizations – seven political parties and two non-party organizations, and took place between 22 March and 10 June 1989. Organized at the initiative of a non-party organization, the Independent Lawyers’ Forum (*Független Jogász Fórum*–FJF), the ORT aimed to bring the main organizations of the opposition under the same political umbrella in order to negotiate with the HSWP the transition to a new political order. The present section addresses the constituent parts of the ORT and traces back the intellectual origins of the most significant of them. The nine organizations which eventually took part in the ORT in March–June 1989 are discussed below by drawing on the taxonomy put forward by András Bozóki and Gergely Karácsony, who distinguish between newly established political parties, revived “historic parties” and non-party organizations.⁸⁹ Thus, the constituent parts of the ORT can be classified as follows: (1) three newly established opposition parties, namely the Hungarian Democratic Forum–HDF (*Magyar Demokrata Fórum*–MDF); the Alliance of Free Democrats–AFD (*Szabad Demokraták Szövetsége*–SZDSZ); and the Federation of Young Democrats (*Fiatal Demokraták Szövetsége*–FIDESZ); (2) four “historic parties,” namely the Hungarian Social Democratic Party–HSDP (*Magyarországi Szociáldemokrata Párt*–MSZDP); the Independent Smallholders’ Party–ISP (*Független Kisgazdapárt*–FKGP); the Hungarian People’s Party (*Magyar Néppárt*–MNP); and the Christian Democratic People’s Party (*Kereszténydemokrata Néppárt*–KDNP), which joined the ORT at a later stage in June 1989; and (3) two non-party organizations, namely the Endre Bajcsy-Zsilinszky Friendship Society (*Bajcsy-Zsilinszky Endre Baráti Társaság*–BZSBT); and the Democratic League of Independent Trade Unions (*Független Szakszervezetek Demokratikus Ligája*–FSZDL).⁹⁰

Of the three newly established political parties mentioned above, two were particularly influential during the ORT, namely the

Hungarian Democratic Forum and the Alliance of Free Democrats, the more so in that from a historical perspective they epitomized two major currents of political thought in modern Hungary: populist and urbanist, respectively. Well before the communist takeover, these two intellectual currents epitomized two essentially different approaches to modernization, nation-building and political development. The populists advocated a national “third way” between Eastern and Western ways of life, able to preserve traditional values and foster the development of national culture. In contradistinction, the urbanists advocated the Western model of parliamentary democracy, market economy and liberal values. As a consequence, the grounds for critical stances towards the regime expressed from the midst of populist, respectively, urbanist milieus differed significantly. As Máté Szabó points out: “The cleavage between the urbanists and the populists from the 1960s onward formed the dominant principle structuring the Hungarian opposition. The communist party leadership likewise differentiated its political strategy towards the opposition along the lines of the two currents, identifying the former as ‘the bourgeois’ (*polgári*) and the latter as the ‘radical nationalists’ (*nemzeti radikális*).”⁹¹ It should be added that during the Kádár era the regime saw in national-populist intellectuals and groups possible fellow travelers and therefore treated them more leniently, while individuals and groups belonging to the democratic opposition were subject to constant harassment. There were, however, instances of dissent in which populists and urbanists joined forces, as in the case of the letter of support for the Czechoslovak Charter 77 which was signed by 43 Hungarian intellectuals in January 1977.⁹²

The Hungarian Democratic Forum (HDF) was established as a legal movement following a meeting organized at Lakitelek on 27 September 1987 in the presence of a group of reform communists headed by Pozsgay. Benefiting from public exposure, as well as from support by the softliners in the HSWP, the HDF

managed to become one of the most influential political forces of the emerging opposition. Among the “founding fathers” of the HDF could be found populist writers and poets belonging to different generations, ranging from Sándor Csoóri, István Csurka, Gyula Fekete and Lajos Für to Sándor Lezsák and Zoltán Biro.⁹³ The protection of the Hungarian minorities in other countries ranked high on the agenda of the HDF. As already mentioned, the project of systematization of the territory and settlements launched by the supreme leader of the Romanian communists, Ceaușescu, envisaged a significant reduction of the number of villages in Romania. In Hungary, the project was perceived as aiming at liquidating the Hungarian villages in Transylvania and consequently protests intensified from the mid-1980s onwards. Several organizations, of which the most important were the HDF and the Endre Bajcsy-Zsilinszky Friendship Society, organized on 27 June 1988 a large demonstration in Budapest against the Romanian plans of rural systematization. Such public protests in support of Hungarians outside Hungary reinforced the image of the HDF as one of the most influential emerging parties of the political right. A major political figure during the process of democratic transition in Hungary, József Antall, was involved in the activities of the HDF beginning in early 1989.⁹⁴

The Alliance of Free Democrats (AFD) epitomized the urbanist current of opposition politics and was established on 13 November 1988 on the basis of the existing Network of Free Initiatives–NFI (*Szabad Kezdeményezések Hálózata*–SZKH), which had been established on 1 May the same year.⁹⁵ The NFI was established with the goal of unifying various, primarily urban civic groups under an umbrella organization and thus enabling them to disseminate their radical anti-regime discourse more efficiently among larger strata of the population. The individuals who formed what was called the “democratic opposition” of the late 1980s came from different dissident subcultures, of which the most

significant were radical civic activism, focusing on liberal values and issues of human rights, and the samizdat culture which emerged in reaction to the communist regime’s monopoly of information. Among the prominent figures of intellectual dissent in Hungary should be mentioned János Kis and György Bence. During the first half of the 1970s, these two intellectuals evolved from radical Marxist reformism to human rights activism. After the imposition of Martial Law in Poland on 13 December 1981 and the temporary suppression of Solidarity, however, Kis moved towards open dissent, while Bence took a more cautious stance.⁹⁶ As for the samizdat culture, we should mention Gábor Demszky, who became a central figure of this phenomenon beginning in 1980, and László Rajk, the son of the top communist official executed under Rákosi’s rule after a famous Stalinist show trial.

The development of these loose dissident currents was also influenced by the anti-regime stances in neighboring countries, especially by the founding of Charter 77 in Czechoslovakia and the birth of Solidarity in Poland. With the establishment of the most prominent samizdat periodical *Beszélő* (Speaker) in 1981, the political discourse of the “democratic opposition” became increasingly uncompromising up to the point of boldly asking for a “radical political change in Hungary.” In this respect, worth mentioning is a long document entitled “Social Contract” (*Társadalmi Szerződés*), which *Beszélő* published in June 1987. This text provided a thorough analysis of Hungarian politics and put forward a genuine political program of the “democratic opposition.” First and foremost, the document proclaimed that “Kádár must go!” This was a strong statement which indicated that at least for certain segments of Hungarian society the tacit deal which stayed at the basis of Kádár’s “goulash communism” was over. Apart from Kis, who became the leader of the AFD, we should mention Bálint Magyar and Péter Tölgyessy as important figures of the democratic opposition during the ORT and NRT.⁹⁷

In 1988–89, the HDF and AFD proved to be the most redoubtable political forces of the opposition. Apart from them, however, a third political party emerged in 1988 and grew steadily to become an important political force in the post-1989 period. The Federation of Young Democrats (FYD) was established on 30 March 1988 and was initially intended to offer an alternative to the League of Communist Youth (*Kommunista Ifjúsági Szövetség*–KISZ). With regard to the political objectives of the FYD, Kontler observes that it “endeavored to some extent to supersede the urbanist-populist divide and submitted a programme in which a mixed economy, human rights, political pluralism and national values were equally emphasized.”⁹⁸ The FYD epitomized political and generational change, and the leader of the party, Viktor Orbán, behaved accordingly at the time. For instance, during the memorial service held on 16 June 1989 in Heroes’ Square in Budapest occasioned by the reburial of Nagy and his close collaborators, Orbán delivered a strongly anti-communist discourse in which he stated: “We are not satisfied with the promises of communist politicians that commit them to nothing; we must see to it that the ruling party can never again use force against us.”⁹⁹ In terms of political goals, the FYD placed itself close to the democratic opposition during the ORT and NRT.

Apart from the three newly established political parties discussed above, which were born of the post-1956 political cultures of resistance to communist rule in Hungary, in 1988–89 four “historic parties” were also reestablished. Two of the revived “historic parties,” namely the Independent Smallholders’ Party (ISP) and the Hungarian Social Democratic Party (HSDP), had been prominent during the interwar period and represented powerful competitors for the Hungarian Communist Party (HCP) during the period of transition to a communist dictatorship in Hungary (1944–48). As shown above in the section on regime political culture, the elections of 4 November 1945 were won by

the ISP with 57 percent, while the HSDP received 17.4 percent and the HCP only 17 percent. However, Rákosi’s infamous “salami tactics” enabled the HCP to come to power and establish a dictatorship of the proletariat in Hungary. As part of the general trend towards political pluralism of late 1988–early 1989, the ISP was reestablished on 18 November 1988 by some party veterans and middle-aged intellectuals. While moderate and radical views regarding immediate political action clashed within the party, the ISP supported the idea of a unified opposition and sided with the democratic opposition during the ORT. The HSDP had been alongside the ISP one of the influential political parties in the immediate aftermath of World War II. In accordance with the tactics adopted throughout Sovietized ECE, the communists saw in the social democrats a redoubtable political competitor and therefore maneuvered to take over the party through the unification of the two. After the forced unification of 1948, the “left wing” of the HSDP sided with the communists, while its “right wing” was regarded as an enemy of the regime and was repressed as such. The HSDP was reestablished in January 1989. However, the internal conflicts between these historical factions within the party impeded coherent political action and the party lost its importance.¹⁰⁰

The other two “historic parties” were the Hungarian People’s Party (HPP) and the Christian Democratic People’s Party (CDPP). The HPP was reestablished as a continuator of the National Peasant Party (NPP), which had been founded in 1938 and had its ideological roots in the populist current. In the aftermath of the November 1945 elections, the NPP entered the Left Wing Bloc together with the communists and the social democrats. After the communist takeover, many of the NPP members were co-opted by the regime. As Bozóki and Karácsony put it: “Unlike the communist reformer intellectuals, the former members of the Peasants’ Party were not working on the disintegration of the

system from inside but were building it from the outside.”¹⁰¹ A precursor of the HPP was the Veres Péter Society, which was established in 1986 with support from the reformist wing of the HSWP and named as such after a populist writer. Since many of the HPP members were close to both the HDF and the softliners’ faction in the HSWP, the party articulated a mild, primarily cultural criticism of the communist regime. The Christian Democratic People’s Party (CDPP) was reorganized in April 1989. According to Bozóki and Karácsony, the party founders intention was “to revive and represent not simply a party but an institutionally autonomous Catholic world.”¹⁰² There were at least two generations in the party: the older had experienced a period of political socialization during the short-lived democratic interlude of 1944–48, while the younger and more politically active was animated by contemporary ideas of Christian democracy. Eventually, the CDPP joined the ORT in June 1989 and maintained a moderate stance favoring gradual political change.

As for the two non-party organizations, both favored an evolutionary strategy of reviving civil society. The Endre Bajcsy-Zsilinszky Friendship Society was established in 1986 and focused on issues related to preservation of national values and protection of Hungarian minorities in neighboring countries. The Society was close to the HDF and the reformist faction within the HSWP epitomized by Pozsgay. The Democratic League of Independent Trade Unions was an association of alternative trade unions of which the most significant was the Democratic Trade Union of Academic Employees. Given its membership, the League, which comprised mainly social scientists, sided with the AFD.¹⁰³

It took the ORT almost three months to reach an agreement, as noted above. After the ORT came to an end on 10 June 1989, the NRT was initiated. These negotiations lasted another three months (13 June–18 September 1989) and brought together the ruling HSWP, the Opposition Roundtable and a series of social

organizations close to the HSWP. It may be argued that the final agreement of the National Roundtable practically marked the end of the communist epoch in Hungary. However, given the negotiated nature of the regime change in Hungary, it is even harder than in the case of Poland to establish a symbolic date for the end of communism in this country.

Reflections on the “Negotiated Revolution” in Hungary

The October 1956 revolution represented a watershed in the history of communist Hungary. The bloody collapse of Hungarian Stalinism and the reestablishment of communist rule in that country through a communist counter-revolution unique in the Soviet bloc shaped both regime and community political cultures over the period 1956–89. Unlike in Poland, where both the Solidarity “revolution” and Jaruzelski “counter-revolution” were self-limited, although to different degrees, Hungary experienced in 1956 a genuine revolution followed by a counter-revolution. Therefore, the Kádár regime had a fundamental legitimacy problem: it was imposed, very much like the Rákosi regime, from “above and abroad.” As compared to the Husák regime, the Kádár regime was also imposed by the Soviet tanks, which had nonetheless to crush in 1956 the desperate armed resistance of the Hungarian revolutionaries. This was not the case in Czechoslovakia in August 1968, when the Soviet-led WTO troops which put an end to the Prague Spring faced little, if any, armed resistance. The 1956 revolution, its bloody suppression and the period of retributions which followed forced the Kádár regime to offer Hungarian society a tacit deal and devise policies aimed at achieving “legitimacy through consumption.” Since a certain level of economic prosperity and social benefits was required in order

to ensure social peace, the economic reforms introduced in 1968, known as the New Economic Mechanism, were also meant to ensure that Hungary would avoid economic blockage followed by outbursts of social discontent. The Hungarian “experiment in limited pluralism” created a specific pattern of action by dissident groups, whose activity was in general based on the principle of piecemeal achievements and continuous bargaining in terms of what was tolerated by the regime and what was not. The political cultures of resistance, therefore, were shaped, especially from 1968 onwards, by the idea of negotiation and gradual change. The development of the Hungarian opposition followed an already traditional divide in Hungarian culture, i.e., populist–urbanist, from which two currents of dissent emerged. While the populist opposition had a more ambiguous relationship with the regime and maintained close links with the softliners within the HSWP in the late 1980s, the urbanist dissidence had greater difficulties in coagulating. What has been called the “democratic opposition” in communist Hungary, i.e., the radical civic activism based on human rights took shape gradually and became more structured in response to external events such as the founding of Charter 77 in Czechoslovakia and the birth of Solidarity in Poland.

Apart from agency – be it from above, i.e., from within the ruling HSWP, or from below, i.e., from the ranks of the populist or urbanist opposition – contingency played a significant role in determining the course of the 1989 events in Hungary. The coming to power of Gorbachev in 1985 represented an external factor of prime importance in the collapse of communism in this country, for his bold domestic reforms in the Soviet Union made the Hungarian “barrack” of the Soviet camp not look so happy and shiny anymore. However, in the specific case of Hungary, ecological problems and minority issues mobilized significant segments of society during the 1980s. The environmental threat posed by the construction of the Gabčíkovo-Nagymaros dam on

the river Danube and the treatment of the Hungarian minorities living in the neighboring countries, especially the Hungarian minority in the Romanian province of Transylvania, led to mass demonstrations and increased activism by civic groups and emerging political parties in the late 1980s. This high level of popular mobilization signaled that Hungarian civil society was able to organize itself and carry out large-scale mass rallies with numerous participants. The “snowball” of political changes, which began its race downhill in Poland also influenced the unfolding of events in Hungary, inasmuch as the Polish example of roundtable talks was invoked by incumbents as well as by representatives of the opposition.

The “negotiated revolution” in Hungary was initiated from above by the reformist faction which took over the HSWP after 1987. Kádár, who had led the country since 1956, was finally ousted from power in May 1988. The new power elite loosened their grip on society and allowed the establishment of “social groups for political purposes,” a decision that opened the way for the establishment or reestablishment of other political parties besides the HSWP. In contradistinction with Poland, where Solidarity epitomized the opposition to the regime, the political opposition in late 1988–early 1989 Hungary was less structured. Two political parties emerged from the populist and urbanist opposition groups respectively. “Historic parties” were reestablished. Non-party organizations and civic groups became more and more active within the public sphere. Thus, a major feature of the Hungarian “negotiated revolution” was that it consisted of two roundtables. It began with an Opposition Roundtable organized with the purpose of unifying the opposition to the ruling communist party, which was followed by a trilateral National Roundtable that lasted between 13 June and 18 September 1989 and reunited the ruling HSWP, the Opposition Roundtable and a series of social organizations close to the HSWP.

All in all, these two-step negotiations lasted almost six months, from 22 March to 18 September 1989.

Before the National Roundtable was concluded, the Hungarian authorities contributed to the further acceleration of the “snowballing effect” by tearing down the Hungarian sector of the Iron Curtain. On 27 June 1989, the Austrian minister of foreign affairs, Alois Mock, and his Hungarian counterpart, Gyula Horn met for a symbolic ceremony during which they jointly opened the fence between the two countries. The *Austria Presse Agentur* released a photograph which captured the historic significance of the event: it showed the two ministers of foreign affairs effectively cutting the barbed wire of the Hungarian section of the Iron Curtain.¹⁰⁴ The Hungarian initiative enabled numerous East German citizens to leave their home country for West Germany via Hungary and Austria, and thus enabled the 1989 wave of changes to reach East Germany.

CHAPTER FOUR

East Germany

In 1949, two German states came officially into being. The Federal Republic of Germany–FRG (*Bundesrepublik Deutschland*–BRD) was established on 23 May 1949, while the German Democratic Republic–GDR (*Deutsche Demokratische Republik*–DDR) was officially proclaimed on 7 October 1949. The two German states were born on the ruins of defeated Nazi Germany and therefore both had to overcome the legacies of World War II, come to terms with their recent past, and engage in complex processes of reconstruction and economic recovery while under foreign occupation.¹ Since the Iron Curtain divided Germany into two, both West and East Germany were Cold War frontline countries during the period 1949–89. Anthony Glees notes that terms such as “Auschwitz,” “occupation,” “division,” and “unity” describe best the particular political development of Germany in the twentieth century.² During the forty-year period mentioned above, the two German states addressed in various ways the pivotal issues of reunification, coexistence, or delimitation in accordance with

Notes for this chapter begin on page 374.

external constraints and internal limitations, which led to the emergence of different political cultures in West and East Germany respectively. This determined not only the pattern of German reunification after 1989, but also the emergence of the East-West differences still present within unified Germany. This chapter concentrates on the 1989 demise of the “welfare dictatorship” established in the Soviet Occupation Zone (*Sowjetische Besatzungszone*–SBZ), and is concerned with applying the explanatory model presented in Chapter One to the case of East Germany. The intricate issues concerning the relations between the two German states during the period 1949–89, although important for understanding developments in German politics after 1989, are not the main focus of this analysis. Accordingly, the next section addresses the particular aggregation of structural, conjunctural and nation-specific factors which led to the demise of state socialism in East Germany.

Structural Factors

Economic Failure

Among the economies of the former Soviet bloc countries, those of East Germany and Czechoslovakia distinguished themselves as the most advanced. Comparative analyses of the communist countries in ECE have pointed towards the prominent position held by the East German economy, which constantly surpassed the economies of the “fraternal” regimes.³ The living standard in East Germany was high in comparison with the rest of the Soviet bloc countries. However, in comparison with the West German economic miracle, the economic performance of the East German regime remained modest and was perceived as such by a significant part of its population. Therefore, apart from examining the

economic policies of the regime, this section also addresses the problem of the economic disparity between East and West Germany, which became a major source of popular discontent with the regime in GDR.

The newly established GDR had to face numerous and difficult problems. The country was destroyed and its labor force decimated by war. Moreover, the Soviets had devised, and systematically carried out, a thorough plan of dismantling machinery, industrial equipment and manufacturing facilities from the territories under their control as war reparations. Thus, by the end of June 1945 the Soviets had dismantled in a planned and systematic manner a total of 1,575 factories.⁴ By 1946, even the Soviet commanders had become aware of the fact that such a process was about to provoke an “economic vacuum” in the parts of defeated Germany occupied by Soviet troops. Consequently, steps were taken towards leaving the industrial facilities targeted for relocation in their original locations while putting them under Soviet control. The payment of war reparations to the Soviet Union put a heavy burden on the East German economy. For instance, in 1950–51, the reparation deliveries to the Soviet Union represented over 17 percent of the national income of East Germany.⁵ At the same time, measures were taken to confiscate the property that belonged to the Nazis and their supporters. In October 1945, the Soviet Military Command issued two orders, No. 124 and No. 126, concerning the expropriation of the property, including production facilities and real estate, owned by Nazis and war criminals.⁶

In the economic realm, the policies devised and implemented by the Soviet authorities in their occupation zone followed the “revolution from above” principle.⁷ A first economic plan, covering only two years, was announced at the end of June 1948. An official explanation for the introduction of the Two-Year Plan (TYP) 1949–50 emphasized the economic achievements made in the Soviet Occupation Zone. According to the official figures, for the

first quarter of 1948 the state-owned enterprises (*Volkseigene Betriebe*) represented only 8 percent of the total number of companies “required to register,” but their output amounted to some 40 percent of production in the most important branches of industry. In some industrial branches more than 40 percent of the overall production was realized by state-owned enterprises, as follows: mining – 99 percent; metallurgy – 54 percent; cellulose and paper – 44 percent; machine building and metal processing – 41 percent; electric power and gas – 40 percent. All in all, it was claimed that 39 percent of the overall industrial output was realized by state-owned enterprises.⁸ Another issue was the expropriation of industrial facilities owned by “large, monopolistic industrial and financial conglomerates” and the land reform, which, the official propaganda claimed, was aimed at drastically reducing the influence of the “Junkers and large landowners, as the most important pillars of German imperialism and fascism.”⁹

The first Five-Year Plan (FYP) 1951–55 was meant to accelerate the postwar recovery and complete the “socialist” transformation of the East German economy. According to the central planners, recovery and further development were primarily envisaged with regard to four main sectors: (1) energy; (2) metallurgy; (3) heavy machinery; and (4) export-oriented manufacturing branches. Such an economic strategy was reflected by the projected levels of production for 1955 (final year of the First FYP) compared to 1950 (final year of the TYP): precision engineering and optics – 239 percent; metallurgy – 237 percent; heavy machinery – 221 percent; textiles – 201 percent; electronics – 196 percent; mining – 194 percent; food industry – 187 percent; chemical industry – 182 percent; energy – 177 percent, etc.¹⁰ Considering the initial conditions at the moment of the establishment of the East German state, one can argue that in terms of economic recovery the two plans devised for the period 1949–55 did succeed. In this respect, Peter Hübner observes: “Even if official propaganda inflated the

results of the Two-Year Plan 1949–50 and the First Five-Year Plan 1951–55, the accomplishments achieved by the mid-1950s were remarkable.”¹¹ Thus, official data showed that the East German economy grew from 30.7 billion marks in 1950 to 49.8 billion marks in 1955.¹² Nevertheless, the societal response to the economic growth in the GDR was not that expected by the regime, for an increasing number of East German citizens became convinced that they could live a meaningful life only in West Germany. Thus, during the period January 1951–April 1953, some 447,000 GDR citizens fled to the FRG, with over 120,000 individuals leaving East Germany from the beginning of the year 1953.¹³

The death of Stalin in March 1953 was followed by a policy change in the Kremlin, generally known as the New Course, aimed at loosening the party’s grip on society. In the case of East Germany, however, Walter Ulbricht continued to pursue a radical course aimed at accelerating the “building of socialism” through sustained development and further mobilization of the population. In May 1953, industrial workers saw their work norms increasing by an average of 10 percent, which created a profound frustration among them.¹⁴ The stiff norms determined the outbreak of the June 1953 workers’ revolt in East Berlin, the most significant protest from below in the history of the GDR until the massive demonstrations of October–November 1989, which provoked the regime change in East Germany. The 1953 uprising was primarily a working-class phenomenon, which revealed the deep dissatisfaction of large strata of the population with their working and living conditions. The uprising was sparked on 16 June by construction workers from various building sites in Berlin, angered by the increased productivity quotas. Infuriated workers went on strike spontaneously and marched downtown of East Berlin, protesting against government’s measures aimed at raising the production norms. The revolt reached its climax on 17 June, when

a general strike was declared and large crowds marched through East Berlin, where the demonstration turned violent and official buildings were set on fire. The protest spread to other cities and towns, as well as to the countryside, where the regime's collectivization drive targeted the private farmers.¹⁵ Eventually, the protest was put down with the help of Soviet troops.

During the Second FYP 1956–60, the East German economy was supposed to consolidate the achievements of the First FYP. The party leadership was in an over-optimistic mood with regard to the performance of the GDR economy. In July 1958, in front of the Fifth Congress of the Socialist Unity Party of Germany (*Sozialistische Einheitspartei Deutschlands*–SED), Ulbricht formulated the “main economic objective” (*die ökonomische Hauptaufgabe*) of the party in the following terms: “Within a few years the national economy of the GDR is to develop in such a way as to definitely prove the superiority of the socialist economic system as opposed to the rule of the imperialist forces of the Bonn republic and consequently to ‘catch up and overtake’ West Germany with respect to per capita consumption of food and consumer goods.”¹⁶ In order to attain this objective, the East German leadership decided in 1958 to abandon the Second FYP and to launch instead a Seven-Year Plan, covering the period 1959–65. During this Seven-Year Plan, the GDR was expected to “catch up and overtake” (*einholen und überholen*) the FRG in the above-mentioned sectors.

By August 1961, however, at least two things were clear: (1) East Germany was not “catching up and overtaking” West Germany in terms of consumer goods production and distribution; and (2) large segments of the East German population, especially the younger generations, were fascinated by the West German “economic miracle,” so that emigration to the FRG via West Berlin was constantly growing. Thus, the SED leadership decided to erect the infamous Berlin Wall, which came into being on 13 August

1961, with the clear objective of stopping the massive emigration of skilled workforce to West Germany. The erection of the Berlin Wall had multiple consequences upon the GDR, as further shown. Among others, it also led to a change in the SED's economic policy. In 1962, the Seven-Year Plan 1959–65 was abandoned and replaced with a “perspective” Seven-Year Plan 1964–70. This change in economic planning coincided with the launch of Ulbricht's “reform from above” aimed at increasing the efficiency of the GDR economy. Faced with the undeniable achievements of the booming economy of West Germany, the supreme leader of the SED was determined to improve the economic performance of East Germany in order to provide solid evidence for the alleged “economic, political, social, and moral superiority of socialism.”¹⁷ Thus, in 1962 the regime initiated a reform program entitled “Principles for the New Economic System of Planning and Management of the National Economy” (*Neues Ökonomisches System der Planung und Leitung der Volkswirtschaft*–NÖSPL), generally known as the New Economic System (*Neues Ökonomisches System*–NÖS), which was finally approved by the party in July 1963. As a consequence, during the period 1963–70 the GDR economy was practically conducted according to annual plans.

The economic reforms envisaged by the SED leadership were aimed at enhancing productivity and intensifying industrial development by allowing a certain degree of flexibility to the centrally planned economy as well as by increasing the participation of technocrats in the economic decision-making process.¹⁸ In December 1965, seemingly confident of the success of his “reform from above,” Ulbricht stated:

With the new economic system of planning and management, we are creating, on the basis of the economic laws of socialism, the fundamental economic system of socialism in the German

Democratic Republic. It is the economic system of a highly developed socialist industrial state with intensive modern agriculture. It is the economic system of a socialist state that has essentially mastered the unheard-of burdens imposed by the imperialist past, especially by the fascist world war and the division of the country. It is an ideological task of the first order to insure that everyone understands the scope of this qualitative change in our economy and society. Understanding this qualitative change and its relationship to the new economic system of planning and management is a criterion for the maturity of leadership cadres, not only in the economy.¹⁹

All in all, the NÖS had only modest effects on the general improvement of the East German economy. Furthermore, the slight improvement brought about by the NÖS – especially in terms of increased consumption by the population – was almost insignificant as compared to the “economic miracle” experienced by the West German economy. In spite of the mixed results, Ulbricht announced in December 1965 that the NÖS would enter its second stage of implementation.²⁰ Nevertheless, the NÖS became after 1965 the subject of internal disputes within the SED, which signaled the structuring of a sort of counter-elite around Erich Honecker, and thus it was eventually abandoned in 1968. One should mention, however, as a major achievement of the NÖS period, the 1967 official adoption of the five-day working week by the GDR.²¹ Faced with growing intra-party opposition to the economic reform program, Ulbricht decided in 1968 to replace the NÖS with a renewed reform program, entitled the Economic System of Socialism (*Ökonomische System des Sozialismus*–ÖSS), which envisaged the use of the newest scientific discoveries and technological innovations in the purpose of accelerating the development of the GDR.²² The launch of the ÖSS marked also a change with regard to the main objective of the East German economy. Beginning in 1969, Ulbricht

put forward a reformulated goal, which read: “overtake without catching up” (*überholen ohne einzuholen*). As mentioned, the previous objective had been to “catch up and overtake” (*einholen und überholen*) the West German economy, and this had obviously not been fulfilled.²³ Ulbricht’s reformulated goal suggested in fact that the SED was pursuing a different path of economic and social development, leading to a superior type of society in East Germany as compared to West Germany.

The fall of Ulbricht and the coming to power of Honecker led to a significant change of economic policy. Although the reforms initiated from above by the former were never fully implemented, they nonetheless represented rather genuine attempts at creating a more flexible economic system with the clear goal of increasing productivity and accelerating development. In contradistinction to Ulbricht, Honecker was determined to transform East Germany into a kind of socialist welfare state as a means of consolidating his rule and legitimating the new power elite around him. Yet, Honecker simply disregarded the fact that the GDR economy was not able to support the costs incurred by such an endeavor. Under his leadership, Ulbricht’s experiments with economic reform were rapidly forgotten, while the GDR economy was conducted on the basis of four FYPs, i.e., 1971–75, 1976–80, 1981–85 and 1986–90. Honecker’s rigid vision on the “unity of economic and social policy” (*Einheit von Wirtschafts- und Sozialpolitik*), with no consideration for the actual capacity of the economy to provide support for subsidized consumption and extended social benefits, provoked the deep economic imbalances that paved the way for the 1989 demise of the East German dictatorship.²⁴ For instance, an official document dated April 1972 presents the central tenets of SED social policy:

The Central Committee of the Socialist Unity Party of Germany, the national executive board of the Free German Trade Union Federation, and the Council of Ministers of the

German Democratic Republic hereby resolve: [1] to raise the pensions and social welfare of 3.4 million citizens; [2] to implement measures to support working mothers, young married couples, and birthrate development; [3] to create improved living conditions for workers and employees and to adjust rents for apartments in new [i.e. postwar] housing so that they better correspond to income. These decisions continue the path that was set by the main task of the Five-Year Plan from 1971 to 1975. The path consists of further raising the material and cultural living standard of the people on the basis of a high rate of development of socialist production, increased effectivity, scientific and technological progress, and the growth of work productivity.²⁵

The regime's social policy put an increasingly heavy burden on the GDR state budget. In order to support such a social policy, East Germany borrowed heavily from the West. To repay its debt, the regime invested in selected sectors, especially in the field of electronics, in the hope of stimulating production and boosting exports. By the mid-1980s, however, it became clear that such an economic strategy was doomed to failure because of the unfavorable international conjuncture and the structural flaws of the GDR centrally planned economy. Moreover, in the aftermath of the second oil shock of 1979 the Soviet Union decided to cut down its supplies of crude oil to East Germany, and in late 1981 announced a reduction in the deliveries of this natural resource from 19 million tons to 17 million tons per year.²⁶ In response, East German industry was compelled to shift from oil to brown coal, which could be domestically supplied.²⁷ However, the switch from a liquid energy source (oil) to a solid one (coal) implied additional costs related to technological modifications and opening of new locations for brown coal mining. Furthermore, this technological transformation implied an increased environmental pollution, especially air pollution, with associated health problems

for the population in the respective areas, at a time when the protection of the environment became increasingly important in Western democracies, FRG included.²⁸

All in all, the disparities between West and East Germany became increasingly significant by 1989. Data collected in early 1990 painted a sobering picture of the overall performance of the East German economy. In order to make a meaningful comparison, one should take into account first the basic data. In the last year of its existence, the GDR had a population of 16.7 million, approximately a fourth that of the FRG (61.4 million), while in terms of land surface the GDR (108,000 sq. km) was about half the size of the FRG (249,000 sq. km).²⁹ Yet, Gross National Product (GNP) in the GDR was about 10 percent the size of that in the FRG, while labor productivity amounted to only 30–35 percent of that in the FRG. At the end of April 1990, the net foreign debt of East Germany calculated in convertible currencies amounted to some USD 16.25 billion (approximately one tenth of its GNP).³⁰ In terms of living standard, for instance, when comparing the percentage of households possessing a personal car, color TV set and telephone, the differences between the two German states are conspicuous. In the FRG, of the total number of households, 97 percent owned an automobile; 94 percent a color TV set; and 98 percent a telephone, while in the GDR, of the total number of households, 52 percent owned an automobile; 52 percent a color TV set; and only 7 percent owned a telephone.³¹

To conclude this section, it may be argued that in spite of its efforts aimed at expanding the welfare state and increasing consumption, the communist regime in East Germany was never able to provide the quantity, quality, and range of consumer goods available to the population of West Germany. Consequently, by the late 1980s numerous GDR citizens were increasingly dissatisfied with communist rule in their country. In the case of East Germany, relative dissatisfaction rooted in the comparison

with the living standard of the population in West Germany played an even more significant role in the breakdown of the communist regime than absolute dissatisfaction generated by the scarcity of consumer goods and services.³²

Ideological Decay

When examining communist rule in Sovietized Europe, an issue of prime importance is to identify what ensured the stability of those regimes for such a long period of time. In the case of East Germany, the issue was even more complicated: apart from being established from “above and abroad,” the GDR had to face the symbolic competition with the other German state, the FRG. As Martin Sabrow aptly observes, the communist regime in East Germany “never enjoyed the support of the majority of the population, and at no time could the regime establish a substitute legitimacy through such incentives as social mobility, economic prosperity, or national identity.” As he further points out, the existence of West Germany proved to be a heavy burden for East Germany: “[The GDR] faced a permanent rival in ... the Federal Republic, a state that claimed the same national identity and whose citizens spoke the same language. The political, social, and cultural influence of West Germany was undeniable and constant throughout the GDR’s entire existence.”³³

For instance, the way ordinary citizens of the GDR reacted towards the food packages program, which West Germany and the United States launched in July 1953 and jointly carried out, showed that there was little, if any, ideological commitment towards the SED.³⁴ In spite of the “educative party work” emphasizing the “immense help provided by the Soviets” and the “provocative background” of the FRG–US humanitarian operation, people just wanted to make ends meet and thus many simply took advantage

of the food packages.³⁵ Moreover, estimates show that until the building of the Berlin Wall in 1961, some 1.65 million East Germans fled to West Germany. This was a clear indication that a large number of GDR citizens did not find the regime’s anti-FRG propaganda convincing and opted instead for a new life in the other Germany. Official ideology gradually lost its influence on East German society after the 1953 uprising despite the fact that the SED propaganda machine was doing its best to inculcate “sound,” socialist values in the new generations during childhood and adolescence through schooling and controlled media. Once they became young adults, many of those youngsters dreamed of a new life in the consumerist, capitalist society epitomized by the FRG.

The situation was different at the level of the GDR power elite. One of the founding myths of both party (SED) and state (GDR) was that of “anti-fascist struggle.”³⁶ For the individuals who composed the inner circle of power within the SED, the utopian dream of building a completely new society against the will of “imperialist circles” from abroad and class enemies from within eroded only slowly. The generation of activists who founded the GDR was composed, as Peter H. Merkl notes, of “old communists ... , including many veterans of the communist parties of the 1920s, the Spanish Civil War, Nazi jails and concentration camps, and of bitter exile outside Germany, including the Soviet Union.”³⁷ For that generation, ideology never lost its unifying power. Besides subservience to Moscow, ensuring the unity of the party and preserving ideological orthodoxy became fundamental for the small political elite brought to power by the Red Army, especially after the 1953 working-class revolt and the intra-party criticism of Ulbricht’s leadership. What Merkl names the “dying of the faith” occurred only slowly in time, under particular external conditions, and rather among the younger apparatchiks, due primarily to the changes in the Soviet policy towards ECE in the mid-1980s.

However, the building of the Berlin Wall induced, somehow paradoxically, a slight departure from these principles under the Ulbricht regime. As mentioned, between 1962 and 1970, the Stalinist leader of the SED, who had initiated the “revolution from above” in 1952, made use of his authority in order to impose a “reform from above” meant primarily to stir economic growth. Moreover, Ulbricht’s view of German–German relations was influenced by an additional element pertaining to West German politics. The federal elections in West Germany held on 28 September 1969 were won by the *Sozialdemokratische Partei Deutschlands* (SPD), which formed a coalition government with the *Freie Demokratische Partei* (FDP). Willy Brandt was elected chancellor on 21 October and a few days later, on 28 October, he stated officially that the new *Ostpolitik* he had initiated since becoming foreign minister of the FRG on 6 December 1966 would be continued.³⁸ Ulbricht responded favorably to Brandt’s efforts directed towards the improvement of relations between the Federal Republic and the Soviet bloc countries, and overtly supported them throughout the year 1970. The Honecker faction within the SED, which opposed the limited reforms from above envisaged by Ulbricht as well as his support for Brandt’s foreign policy initiatives, skillfully played upon Brezhnev’s fears of insubordination by “fraternal” regimes in ECE in the post-1968 period. Eventually, Honecker managed to secure sufficient support from within the SED and the crucial backing of Moscow, replaced Ulbricht at the top of the SED in 1971, put an end to his changes in internal and external policies, and restored the unity of the party and its subservience to the Soviet Union.

While under Honecker ideological orthodoxy was carefully preserved, nothing was left of the “crusading enthusiasm” of the old guard of communist officials who had established the GDR in October 1949. Instead, the regime faced a constant “erosion of ideology” (*Erosion der Ideologie*), as Klaus Schroeder puts it.³⁹ In

this respect, Mary Fulbrook aptly notes: “Utopian goals were effectively abandoned in favor of seeking to satisfy the material needs of the population, with little regard to the longer-term costs.”⁴⁰ It is also worth mentioning that similar ideologically orthodox regimes in ECE, such as those in Romania and Bulgaria, opted for a strategic repositioning in ideological terms by seeking to replace the dying faith in Marxism-Leninism with more or less flamboyant nationalism. However, given its founding fathers’ overt rejection of traditional Prussian militarism and German nationalism, the East German regime had only a very narrow margin in which to maneuver in this respect. Finally, the East German nomenklatura received a major blow when a fundamental change of policy occurred in the Kremlin after the coming to power of Gorbachev in March 1985 and the launch of his reform program. The GDR, whose creation was intimately linked to the early Cold War logic of confrontation, proved to be the most vulnerable to the change of course in Moscow. As far as the GDR power elite is concerned, the concessions made by a younger generation of party leaders to the demonstrators in the fall of 1989, which culminated with the opening of the Berlin Wall on 9 November 1989, were also prompted by a more pragmatic approach to politics resulting from their loss of faith in revolutionary socialism.

Conjunctural Factors

In the fall of 1989, the communist regime in East Germany was particularly exposed to external factors. As mentioned, of all external factors that contributed in one way or another to the inception of the 1989 revolutions in ECE, two are of prime importance in the case of the GDR too: (1) the “Gorbachev factor,” which influenced the course of events in all the six countries under scrutiny, from Poland, which initiated the 1989 sequence of collapse, to Romania,

which concluded it; and (2) the “snowballing effect.” With regard to the influence the change of Soviet foreign policy had on East Germany, one may refer to a discussion in 1971, when Honecker, the SED leader, was reportedly told by Brezhnev, the leader of the CPSU: “Remember, dear Erich, our troops are always there, always at your side.... Without us, there would be no GDR.”⁴¹ As long as the Soviets were there to protect the East German power elite against contestation from within, as was the case in June 1953, the regime was safe. However, towards the late 1980s when the so-called Sinatra Doctrine replaced the Brezhnev Doctrine of “limited sovereignty,” the ruling elite was left alone in face of growing internal contestation.⁴² In his book-length dialogue with Mlynář, Gorbachev emphasizes once again that after his coming to power “freedom of choice” became a fundamental principle in the relationship between the Soviet Union and the communist regimes in ECE: “What was of prime significance for me in all this was always the necessity for freedom of choice in each country.”⁴³ According to Brown, Gorbachev was “exasperated” by Honecker, although he avoided criticizing the SED leader openly. Gorbachev visited the GDR in order to attend on 7 October 1989, together with Honecker, the military parade occasioned by the fortieth anniversary of the founding of the East German republic. On that occasion he stated: “Life punishes those who come late,” which could be understood as a “tactful criticism of Honecker,” as Brown convincingly argues.⁴⁴

The second factor, i.e., the “snowballing effect,” acted differently in each of the six cases discussed. Obviously, this factor did not operate in the case of Poland: it came into being due to the effect the “negotiated revolution” in Poland had on Hungary, which followed a similar pattern of exit from communism. The decision of the Hungarian authorities to dismantle the Iron Curtain fortifications at the border with Austria directly influenced the course of events in East Germany. Especially after the failed 1953 uprising, numerous GDR citizens had opted to leave their

country and settle in West Germany in search of a better life. Even after the construction of the Berlin Wall, there were many who risked their lives in order to cross into West Berlin. During the summer of 1989, many East Germans headed for Hungary from where they crossed unofficially into Austria and continued their journey to West Germany. Analysts estimate that during the month of August 1989, around 5,000 East German citizens crossed the Hungarian border into Austria every week. On 10 September 1989, when Hungary decided to ease controls at the Hungarian-Austrian border, more than 12,000 East Germans crossed into Austria on their way to West Germany.⁴⁵ Simultaneously, numerous East Germans sought refuge in the West German embassies in East Berlin, Prague and Warsaw. All in all, it is estimated that some 50,000 GDR citizens left their country in this way up to the end of October 1989.⁴⁶ Such an exodus put additional pressure on the GDR leadership and created at the same time a special state of mind at the grassroots level among those who did not want to leave their country but wanted to see it changing for the better. It is in this context that the peaceful Monday demonstrations in Leipzig were inaugurated in early September 1989, setting in motion the process of contestation of the regime “from below,” which ultimately determined its collapse.

Nation-Specific Factors

Regime Political Culture

Looking retrospectively, it may be argued that the years 1953, 1961, and 1970–71 marked more or less significant shifts at the level of the regime political culture in East Germany. The events of June–July 1953 indicated that the unity of the SED and the survival of the regime were ensured only as long as ideological

orthodoxy and subservience to the Soviet Union were preserved. As numerous GDR citizens were by no means convinced of the superiority of the “socialist system” and emigration to West Germany remained high, the SED decided to seal off West Berlin from the rest of East Germany. The erection of the Berlin Wall in August 1961 led to a gradual modification of the regime political culture. Protected by the Berlin Wall, which put an end to the massive emigration to the FRG, the Ulbricht regime made “reform from above” a priority and, as mentioned, launched in 1962–63 a program meant to stir economic growth and close the gap between East and West Germany. While pushing towards the creation of a separate, “socialist” nation in the GDR, Ulbricht also envisaged the gradual emancipation of the GDR from the USSR and a rapprochement with the FRG in the new context of post-1966 West German *Ostpolitik*.⁴⁷ Nevertheless, the fall of Khrushchev in 1964 and the coming to power of Brezhnev created a less favorable context for reforms throughout Sovietized ECE, as the crushing of the 1968 Prague Spring unmistakably showed.

A third shift, which one may call a rectifying one, occurred in 1970–71. The Honecker-led faction within the SED, which opposed reforms and advocated obedience to the Soviet Union, managed to oust Ulbricht from power. Honecker returned to the principles that ensured the unity of the SED and the survival of the communist regime in the GDR, i.e., ideological orthodoxy, party unity and subservience to the Soviet Union. However, Honecker’s innovation was the policy of “demarcation” (*Abgrenzung*) from West Germany, paralleled by a process of East-German nation-building, which had already been enunciated by Ulbricht. While paying lip service to the official ideology, Honecker renounced the utopian dreams of revolutionary socialism and built a dictatorship based on “care and coercion,” which survived exactly as long as it was supported from the outside by the Soviet Union. This section addresses the issue of regime

political culture in East Germany by examining the transformations brought about by the events of 1953, 1961, and 1970–71 in terms of political vision and strategy at the level of the SED power elite, and assessing their influence upon the nature of the East German revolution of 1989.

At the end of April 1945, a number of German communists under Ulbricht’s leadership – the so-called “Ulbricht group” – returned from Moscow to reestablish the party and reactivate the communist movement in the Soviet Occupation Zone.⁴⁸ The Soviet Military Administration in Germany (*Sowjetische Militäradministration in Deutschland*–SMAD) was set up on 6 June 1945 and its immediate task was, as Norman Naimark notes, to apply “Soviet policy to everyday German life.”⁴⁹ The German Communist Party (*Kommunistische Partei Deutschlands*–KPD) was officially established on 11 June 1945 under the leadership of Wilhelm Pieck and Walter Ulbricht, just a day after a SMAD decree granted permission for the activity of antifascist political parties and “mass organizations.”⁵⁰ The Proclamation by the CC of the KPD, issued on 11 June, deserves further discussion. The said proclamation put forward a moderate political program aimed at fulfilling “most pressing and immediate tasks” – such as: punishment of war criminals; purging of “active” Nazis from public offices; economic recovery and return to normality; establishment of a democratic system based on self-governance; expropriation of property belonging to war criminals and high-ranking Nazi officials; liquidation of large estates; and renunciation of a foreign policy based on “aggression and violence” – and stressed Germany’s obligation to “repair the damage done to other nations” by the Nazi regime. In terms of political action, the KPD proclamation set forth two major tasks: (1) the democratization of the country through the completion of the “bourgeois-democratic transition” envisaged by the 1848 German revolutionaries; and (2) the founding of a “block of anti-fascist

democratic parties” in order to eliminate the remnants of the Nazi regime and establish a democratic polity.⁵¹ The KPD proclamation of 11 June 1945 made no reference whatsoever to the issue of transforming the Soviet occupied parts of Germany into a “popular democracy.”

Although the communists were the first to reestablish their party in the immediate aftermath of World War II, political society in occupied Germany was promptly revived over the June–July 1945 period. This revival meant the reestablishment of old, “historic” parties, as well as the founding of new ones. In the Soviet zone, the most prominent among the “historic” parties was undoubtedly the Social Democratic Party of Germany (*Sozialdemokratische Partei Deutschlands*–SPD), which was re-founded on 15 June in Berlin. As for the new ones, the most significant were the Christian Democratic Union of Germany (*Christlich-Demokratische Union Deutschlands*–CDU), which was founded in Berlin on 26 June, and the German Liberal-Democratic Party (*Liberal-Demokratische Partei Deutschlands*–LDPD), which was established on 5 July, also in Berlin. These four parties from the Soviet zone – the KPD, SPD, CDU and LDPD – formed on 14 July 1945 the Block of Antifascist-Democratic Parties, also known as the “Antifa-Block.” In spite of the activism of its members and the overt support received from the Soviets, the communists were unable to surpass the social democrats in terms of membership and public appeal. As early as October 1945, the leadership of the KPD started to push towards a merger between the communists and the social democrats. Under Soviet pressure and in spite of resolute opposition by prominent figures of the SPD, a “unification party conference” was eventually organized on 22 April 1946.⁵² Under the joint leadership of the communist Wilhelm Pieck and the social-democrat Otto Grotewohl, a new party resulted from the merger between KPD and SPD under the name of Socialist Unity Party of Germany

(*Sozialistische Einheitspartei Deutschlands*–SED). SPD continued to exist only outside Soviet-occupied Germany.

The gap between the western and eastern parts of Germany was widening because of the growing tensions between the United States and Soviet Union. On 1 January 1947, the American and British occupation zones were linked into an economic “Bizone.”⁵³ Furthermore, the American foreign policy initiatives of 1947, i.e., the Truman Doctrine and the Marshall Plan, as well as the Soviet response in the form of Zhdanov’s “two-camp discourse” at Szklarska Poręba in the fall of that year, determined the course of events in Germany as well. While the Soviet occupied countries in ECE rejected, or were forced to reject, the Marshall Plan, Western Europe benefited from American economic aid. The economic recovery in the western parts of Germany accelerated due to the Marshall Plan. An important measure to ensure absorption of economic aid was the currency reform, which was introduced in the occupation “Bizone” on 20–21 June 1948. Thus, the new German Mark (*Deutsche Mark*–DM) was put into circulation, the western sectors of Berlin included. The Soviets responded swiftly to the increasing integration of the occupation zones of the Western Allies by closing the borders of West Berlin, thus sealing it off from the rest of the Soviet Occupation Zone on 24 June 1948. The Western Allies responded on 26 June 1948 with an airlift, a massive operation to provide supplies to West Berliners known as the Berlin Airlift. Although the Soviet blockade was officially terminated on 12 May 1949, the airlift lasted until 30 September 1949 in order to build up sufficient food and fuel reserves in West Berlin.

With the official establishment of the German Democratic Republic on 7 October 1949, the division of Germany was complete and the SED could engage fully in the process of party-state building. Two major external constraints shaped the regime political culture in East Germany: dependence on the Soviet Union

and competition with West Germany. The GDR's dependence on the Soviet Union made it particularly vulnerable to changes of political course in Moscow, while the very existence of West Germany and the special status of West Berlin constantly hindered the regime's quest to win over the hearts and minds of East Germans. The regime political culture in the former GDR displayed three fundamental features, namely ideological orthodoxy, party unity and subservience to the Soviet Union, which suggest political stagnation rather than dynamism. These features resulted from a series of experiences, which gradually shaped the political culture of the GDR ruling elite. One should mention in this respect the "revolution from above" carried out by the SED in East Germany, which was not only belated in comparison with the rest of the Sovietized countries in ECE, but also the first challenged by a major outburst of contestation "from below."

Ulbricht took over in July 1950 the newly established office of general secretary of the SED, the actual commanding position. However, it was not until 1952 that an all-encompassing process of building "socialism" in East Germany, i.e., a "revolution from above" on the Stalinist model, was launched at his initiative. On 2 July 1952, in a letter addressed to Stalin, Ulbricht stated that the time to start the "building of socialism" (*Aufbau des Sozialismus*) in the GDR had come. Stalin answered on 8 July and gave his consent, just one day before the opening of the Second Conference of the SED, held on 9–12 July 1952, which decided upon the acceleration of the revolutionary changes in the GDR.⁵⁴ The "revolution from above" was carried out in the GDR, as in the rest of Sovietized Europe, through economic mobilization; nationalization of private businesses; collectivization of agriculture; taming of the young generation; cooptation of intellectuals and artists; and domestication of Churches. The accelerated revolutionary transformation of society was met with increased

dissatisfaction at the societal level and provoked tensions within the SED. However, nothing could hamper the process as long as Ulbricht could count on Soviet support.

As known, the death of Stalin on 5 March 1953 prompted a change of policy in the Kremlin. The so-called New Course envisaged a shift of emphasis from production to consumption, aiming at calming societal dissatisfaction with the chronic scarcity of consumer goods. For its part, the SED seemed ready to acknowledge some of the "errors" made in the past and even adopted its New Course on 9 June 1953. At the same time, the GDR power elite maintained the decision to push forward the fulfillment of the plan targets through an increase in work norms by 10 percent, effective from 1 June. As mentioned, the stiff work norms sparked the working-class uprising of 16–17 June 1953. This revolt revealed the vulnerability of the East German party-state. Faced with massive working-class contestation, the regime was compelled to ask for Soviet military support in order to suppress the protests. From the 1953 uprising, the SED leadership learned an important lesson: the promise of building a future better world for the working class was by no means enough to secure the consent of the ruled. In order to survive, the communist regime had to provide for its population. The origin of the system based on care and coercion, characteristic of the mature East German dictatorship, lies in the experience of 1953. In addition, the June 1953 protests also indicated that Soviet military support was crucial for the survival of the communist regime in East Germany.

In the summer of 1953, in addition to the working-class rebellion, the SED leadership was confronted with another problem: during a series of Politburo meetings, Ulbricht's political vision was seriously questioned. This criticism was articulated at the top party level by Wilhelm Zaisser, minister of state security and member of the Politburo, and by Rudolf Herrnstadt, editor

in chief of the official party newspaper *Neues Deutschland* and candidate Politburo member. The so-called Zaisser-Herrnstadt faction secured some support within the party and was close to ousting Ulbricht from power in June–July 1953. However, the final decision regarding the SED leadership was made in the Soviet Union. In the context of Beria's arrest, Ulbricht and Grotewohl, the prime minister of the GDR at the time, paid a visit to Moscow on 9–10 July 1953. The East German delegation seemingly managed to convince the Soviets that Ulbricht was the right person to ensure the unity of the SED, strengthen “collective leadership” in the GDR and pacify the rebellious East German working class. Thus, Ulbricht managed to maintain his office in spite of the intra-party contestation of his rule. As a result, both Zaisser and Herrnstadt were isolated and then removed from office, as well as from the CC of the SED, by the end of July 1953. Finally, they were both expelled from the SED in January 1954.⁵⁵ After this episode, the unity of the SED around its supreme leader became one of the enduring features of the regime political culture. To sum up, the events of June–July 1953 indicated that the unity of the SED could be preserved only as long as ideological orthodoxy and subservience to the Soviet Union were observed. As for the East German population, the bloody repression of the uprising revealed the true nature of the regime, which pretended to represent the working-class, but chose to fire at its own workers. Consequently, the number of people who fled to West Germany via West Berlin rose significantly in the aftermath of the revolt.⁵⁶

After the 1953 working-class revolt, the power elite in East Berlin had to face a major test: the competition between the two systems, state socialism and liberal democracy, epitomized by East and West Germany respectively. Thus, economic legitimation became a most important task for the ruling elite in East Berlin. The SED propaganda machine spared no effort to demonstrate the alleged

superiority of the centrally planned economy of East Germany over the market economy of West Germany. As mentioned above, in July 1958 Ulbricht announced that the “main economic objective” of East Germany was to “overtake and surpass” West Germany in terms of consumption of food and consumer goods. By 1961, not only was it obvious that the “main economic objective” of the SED had not been reached, but it was also clear that East Germany had no chance whatsoever of “overtaking and surpassing” West Germany. Large numbers of East German citizens had become perfectly aware of the superiority of the West German political and economic system, and were simply leaving their country in order to have a new life in West Germany. To be sure, the East German power elite had no intention of acknowledging that East Germany had already lost the competition with West Germany. At the same time, the SED leadership had to find a way to stop the massive emigration of skilled manpower and professionals to West Germany. West Berlin, the Western enclave located right in the middle of the GDR, bore witness to the economic superiority of the West and was a main escape route from East Germany. Consequently, the East German authorities decided to seal off West Berlin in August 1961, and proceed to the gradual building of a heavily guarded system of barriers meant to hamper the crossing of the border to the FRG, and implicitly to enhance the control over the population of the GDR. Obviously, the SED regime declared that the erection of what was known as the Berlin Wall was by no means intended to hamper East Germans from fleeing the country. On the contrary, propaganda maintained, the reason was to protect GDR citizens from a “civil war.”

The official explanation provided by the East German authorities was that the measure was meant to protect East German citizens from alleged “hostile actions” by West Germany. The Decree issued on 13 August 1961 by the GDR Council of Ministers made use of an early Cold War rhetoric to explain the

rationale for sealing off West Berlin: “The citizens of the German Democratic Republic visiting Western Germany are being increasingly subjected to terroristic persecutions. West German and West Berlin espionage organizations are systematically luring citizens of the German Democratic Republic and organizing regular slave traffic.” As a consequence, the same decree further stated, the GDR authorities had decided to introduce at the border with West Berlin a regime similar to that existing at the outer borders of East Germany: “To put an end to the hostile activities of the revanchist and militarist forces of Western Germany and West Berlin, such control is to be introduced on the borders of the German Democratic Republic, including the border with the Western sectors of Greater Berlin, which is usually introduced along the borders of every sovereign state.”⁵⁷

From 1961 to 1989, the Berlin Wall remained not only a symbol of divided Germany, but also an epitome of the Iron Curtain frontline. Its official name, the “Anti-Fascist Protection Rampart” (*Antifaschistischer Schutzwall*), was intended to emphasize the Nazi past, which the FRG – unlike the GDR – allegedly did not leave behind. Yet, in both ideological and economic terms, the building of the Berlin Wall indicated that by 1961 the alleged superiority of the “socialist” system was solely a propagandistic slogan. When allowed to choose freely, people knew perfectly well what to do, as indicated by the steady growth in emigration towards West Germany over the period 1949–61.⁵⁸ Thus, by 12 August 1961 a total number of 2,686,942 individuals had left the GDR for the FRG.⁵⁹ At the same time, it would be a gross exaggeration to affirm that the overwhelming majority of the East German population simply wanted to leave the country for good and settle in West Germany. The regime would not have survived from 1961 to 1989 without the active or passive support of significant segments of the population, as suggested in the section on political cultures of resistance in the former GDR.

After the closing of the border between East and West Berlin on 13 August 1961, the prospects of a German reunification were fading away, and the communist regime in East Germany had to address the thorny issue of its chronic deficit of legitimacy. With the subsequent erection of the Berlin Wall, the GDR regime succeeded in cutting down emigration towards the FRG. Such a political gesture, however, was rather perceived as a capitulation in face of West Germany and thus the legitimacy deficit of the GDR power elite increased. Winning over the minds and hearts of the population proved to be increasingly difficult in the conditions of the West German economic miracle, which fascinated large segments of East German society. At the same time, the separation between East and West Germany, achieved through the erection of the Berlin Wall, produced a shift in the political culture of East German communism. This shift resulted in the initiation of a project of building a separate “socialist” nation in the GDR and redefining the relations between the GDR and the FRG. The epoch of desirable unity faded away and was replaced by the epoch of peaceful coexistence. As for the major principles that ensured the unity of the SED around its supreme leader, as well as the survival of the GDR power elite, they remained the same: ideological orthodoxy, party unity and subservience to the Soviet Union. Paradoxically, it was Ulbricht himself, the supreme leader of the SED who survived politically by observing these principles, that would depart from them by the late 1960s.

As mentioned before, a program of economic reforms known as the New Economic System (NÖS) was launched in 1962 and became official policy of the Ulbricht regime in July 1963. The reform program aimed at increasing productivity and thus permitting the East German economy to catch up with the developed Western economies. Ulbricht also envisaged a restructuring of the party through gradual decentralization and

increased participation of technocrats in the decision-making process. At the same time, he had no intention of putting into question the leading role of the party. A relative liberalization was also felt in the sphere of culture, and the young generations benefited the most from the cultural opening by quickly adopting the latest Western trends in fashion and music. However, the pace of reforms was slowed down by the end of 1965 due to external and internal factors. The fall of Khrushchev and the coming to power of Brezhnev in October 1964 signaled a shift towards stagnation and preservation of the status quo in the Soviet Union. As a consequence, a faction within the SED composed of party hardliners and bureaucrats led by Honecker began to criticize the reform program initiated by Ulbricht. Yet, as Monika Kaiser argues, one should not consider the Ulbricht and Honecker factions as two opposing elite groups, i.e., “old cadres” vs. “technocrats.” Instead, the same author proposes the more appropriate categories of “strategic clique,” organized around Ulbricht, and “institutionalized counter-elite,” structured around Honecker. The reform-oriented “strategic clique” around Ulbricht also comprised a number of technocrats who had risen rapidly to prominence due to their professional qualifications. Conversely, the “institutionalized counter-elite” around Honecker was composed of nomenklatura members and apparatchiks whose positions were threatened by decentralization and the transfer of significant parts of the decision-making process to experts.⁶⁰

Furthermore, Ulbricht sought a rapprochement with West Germany after Brandt’s election as chancellor and his official statement of October 1969 regarding the continuation of *Ostpolitik*, as well as a gradual emancipation of the GDR from the USSR. Such initiatives annoyed both the “institutionalized counter-elite” around Honecker and the CPSU leadership in Moscow. For his part, Brezhnev was concerned about the destabilizing effects at the level of the entire Soviet bloc of a

German–German rapprochement having reformist social-democracy and not revolutionary socialism as an ideological link. He made his view plain on 20 August 1970, during a talk with Honecker occasioned by the visit of a SED delegation to Moscow: “Germany does not exist anymore. That is a good thing. There is the socialist GDR and the capitalist Federal Republic. That is the way things are The future of the GDR lies in the socialist community. We have our troops in your country. That is good and they will remain there.”⁶¹ In this context, Ulbricht was forced to withdraw in May 1971. At the Sixteenth Conference of the CC of the SED, held on 3 May 1971, Erich Honecker became first secretary of the CC of the SED and, from that moment onwards, concerned himself with maintaining the status quo. The main features of the political culture of the Honecker regime remained the same: (1) ideological orthodoxy, including conservative economic thinking; (2) unity of the party; and (3) subservience to the Soviet Union. At the same time, the particular combination of co-optation through social benefits and overall control of society with the help of the secret police reached its mature stage under the rule of Honecker. All in all, from 1971 to 1989 the GDR was a “welfare dictatorship” (*Fürsorgediktatur*) – to use the concept coined by Jarausch in order to stress “the basic contradiction between care and coercion of the SED system.”⁶²

Let us consider the triangular relational nexus which characterized the relations between the communist regimes in the Sovietized ECE, the populations of the respective countries and the Soviet Union during the period 1953–85, i.e., from the uprising in East Berlin until Gorbachev’s coming to power. Whenever the power elite in a communist country proved unable to contain popular unrest or to control political processes which endangered the communist system in that country, the Soviet Union intervened militarily in order to restore the “socialist order.” This happened in June 1953 in East Berlin, in November 1956

in Hungary, and in August 1968 in Czechoslovakia. Therefore, a fundamental goal of the communist regimes in ECE was to ensure social quiescence and thus avoid a Soviet intervention which could end with the removal from power of the leadership that had failed to control the respective society. In the case of the Honecker regime, ideological orthodoxy, party unity and subservience to Soviet Union were thus necessary but not sufficient conditions for ensuring the survival of the regime. “Care” and “coercion” were the crucial elements employed to ensure the stability of the regime.

“Care” represented a fundamental element of the SED strategy of legitimation. However, in its quest to satisfy the basic needs of the population in order to achieve legitimacy, the regime concentrated on expanding the welfare state measures and ended by living well beyond its means.⁶³ The regime’s vision of “care” was rooted, as Hans-Ulrich Wehler aptly points out, in the process of political socialization of a major part the SED leadership during the years of profound economic crisis of the Weimar Republic. Therefore, the SED leadership concentrated on providing for the basic needs of working-class families as those needs had been felt in the crisis years of the Weimar Republic.⁶⁴ Consequently, less attention was paid to the rising expectations of the GDR population, which resulted from the multifaceted process of modernization promoted by the same SED leadership. As Burghard Ciesla and Patrice G. Poutrus argue:

Until the GDR’s demise, the basic rule of thumb was to avoid any abrupt changes in prices, work loads, or salaries. In the Honecker era (1971 to 1989), *this principle proved to be a grave liability*, since Honecker himself – due to his own personal experiences – had internalized a simplistic model of socialism... . In his world view, the average GDR citizen needed a warm, dry apartment, cheap basic food, and steady work. According to Honecker, once these needs had been met, socialism was bound to progress and flourish [emphasis added].⁶⁵

Although the Honecker regime made considerable efforts to achieve legitimacy through the expansion of the communist type of welfare state, the results were disappointing. Simply put, there was no chance whatsoever that East Germany could catch up with West Germany as far as the living standard of the population was concerned. In spite of the regime’s efforts to provide for the population, the result was quite the opposite. Relative frustration continued to accumulate at societal level, and a growing number of East German citizens became convinced that they could live a successful and meaningful life only in the West.⁶⁶

“Coercion” was employed constantly to control society and ensure the political survival of the power elite. Much has been written on the wrongdoings of the infamous East German *Ministerium für Staatssicherheit* (MfS), generally known as the Stasi. As Pollack convincingly argues, during the 1970s and 1980s the SED leadership limited the use of sheer force for implementing its policies:

Especially in the 1970s and 1980s, when the government attempted to create the image of an economically growing, politically stable and widely respected state, when it sought to win the population by welfare state measures and increases in prosperity, and the GDR was included in the international process of détente, the party leaders were no longer able to rely on such harsh measures as they had previously.⁶⁷

True, the secret police kept the population under surveillance but the focus of its activity was prevention and not repression, as requested by the SED leadership. The situation was different at the frontier with West Germany, where the border guards did not hesitate to use deadly force to stop East German citizens fleeing to West Germany.⁶⁸ In case of popular unrest, as was the case in June 1953, the power elite in East Berlin could always count on the support of Soviet tanks. Thus, one should emphasize a particular

aspect of the political culture of the Honecker regime with regard to the issue of making use of violence against its own citizens. While the regime was prepared for the selective use of deadly force against those who wanted to flee the country, it was not prepared for the use of large-scale violence against the rest of the population.

Using “care” and “coercion,” the SED leadership succeeded in ensuring political stability and social quiescence until the coming to power of Gorbachev. Moreover, the same leadership could claim that since the coming to power of Honecker the international prestige of the GDR had been on the rise. The Basic Treaty between the two German states was signed on 21 December 1972. East Germany entered the United Nations on 18 September 1973 and secured international recognition. Moreover, in January 1983 the Honecker regime officially supported the initiative of creating a nuclear-free zone in Europe.⁶⁹ At the same time, numerous victories at international sports competitions added to the international prestige of communist Germany. It appeared therefore that the regime had good reasons to believe that “really existing socialism” in East Germany still had long to live.

The SED managed to maintain its unity also because the new elite that rose to prominence under Honecker was more concerned with preserving its positions rather than challenging the political course set by the aging leadership of the party.⁷⁰ In the Honecker era, the inner circle of power comprised only a few decision-makers, among whom Erich Mielke (the head of the Stasi) and Günter Mittag (a central figure in the process of economic decision-making) featured prominently.⁷¹ The change of policy in the Kremlin became a major destabilizing factor for the communist regime in East Germany. As a reaction to the new political course in Moscow, the East German power elite embarked in 1988–89 on a sort of “double Abgrenzungspolitik,” in the sense that the traditional policy of resolute demarcation from West Germany

was accompanied by a policy of cautious demarcation from the Soviet Union.⁷²

By 1989, however, East Germany was particularly vulnerable to external factors of which the most important were: the renunciation of the Brezhnev Doctrine by the Soviet Union and the political changes in Poland and Hungary. To this must be added a domestic factor of prime importance, namely the fascination of East German citizens with the West German way of life. Beginning in the summer of 1989, this domestic factor determined the mobilization of numerous GDR citizens who simply wanted to leave their country and settle in the FRG. Taking advantage of the opening of the Hungarian border with Austria, thousands of GDR citizens crossed the Hungarian border into Austria in July 1989. This massive wave of emigration to the FRG contributed significantly to the political mobilization of those GDR citizens who did not want to emigrate but wanted to live a better life at home. A major consequence of domestic mobilization was the initiation of the so-called Monday demonstrations in Leipzig on 25 September 1989.

Faced with the growing political mobilization of the population against the regime, the SED leadership was slow in responding to the popular demands for democratization. In the context of the rapidly unfolding political changes in neighboring Poland and Hungary, against the backdrop of the mass escape of GDR citizens to the FRG and the unprecedented mobilization of domestic opposition forces, East Germany celebrated its fortieth anniversary on 6–7 October 1989. On that occasion, Honecker, the supreme leader of the SED, expressed his confidence in the future of the GDR:

Socialism and peace are, and remain, key words for that which we have achieved up to now, as well as that which we will continue to accomplish.... In its fifth decade, the socialist workers' and peasants' state on German soil will continue to

prove – through its actions for the good of its people and through its efforts for peace, security and international cooperation – that its founding in October of 1949 was a turning point in the history of the German people and of Europe.⁷³

As known, the celebration was attended by Gorbachev as well.⁷⁴ His statement, “Life punishes those who come late,” was heavily commented on in the international media as a warning addressed to the SED leadership for their unwillingness to engage in political reforms. The wave of anti-regime demonstrations gained momentum from 6–7 October onwards and reached a peak on 16 October, when some 100,000 people demonstrated in Leipzig. Eventually, the CC of the SED decided to act. On 18 October 1989, Honecker was replaced with a younger apparatchik, Egon Krenz, as general secretary of the party.⁷⁵ This nomination, however, was met with growing discontent by the East German population. The Monday demonstrations in Leipzig continued, while other peaceful protests were organized around the country.

On 31 October–1 November, Krenz paid an official visit to Moscow and held talks with Gorbachev. Under the new leadership, the SED engaged in cautious reforms, including the drafting of an Action Program aimed at making the rule of the SED more appealing to the GDR population. The news came on 2 November, together with the announcement that a number of top communist officials had resigned from their posts.⁷⁶ Instead of diminishing, the contestation from below increased. Demonstrators throughout the GDR demanded to be allowed to travel freely to the West. To paraphrase Wolf Lepenies, the slogan “We want out!” (*Wir wollen raus!*) expressed in fact people’s farewell to socialist utopia.⁷⁷ In a move destined to ease the popular pressure, the SED regime decided to open the borders with West Germany and allow the free crossing of the Berlin Wall on the night of 9 to 10 November 1989. The decision to open the borders with the FRG not only

led to the fall of the Berlin Wall, but was followed by a political vacuum. Once fulfilled, the wish to travel freely to the FRG was replaced by resolute calls for German unity.

Political Cultures of Resistance

The existence of a prosperous and democratic West Germany determined in many respects the shaping of political cultures of resistance in East Germany. As Albert O. Hirschman brilliantly shows, members of a given organization tend to respond in three ways to the perceived decline in the benefit of being members of that particular organization: “exit” (termination of membership); “voice” (expressing discontent); or “loyalty” (preservation of membership).⁷⁸ In the case of the former GDR, the “exit” option became the most obvious manifestation of discontent with the “socialist welfare state” built by the SED in East Germany and contributed to a large extent to the demise of communism in that country. Official figures provided by the West German authorities help one understand the proportions of the exodus of the GDR citizens to the FRG. From the end of World War II until 1948, 732,100 individuals fled from the Soviet Occupation Zone to the zones occupied by the Western Allies. After the official establishment of the two German states in 1949 and until the closing of the border between East and West Berlin on 12 August 1961, a total number of 2,686,942 individuals left East Germany and settled in West Germany. Between 13 August 1961 and the end of 1988, the number of people who left the GDR for the FRG was of 616,051. Finally, from 1 January to 31 December 1989 a total number of 343,854 GDR citizens fled to the FRG. To sum up, during the period 1949–89 a total number 3,646,847 East Germans fled to West Germany.⁷⁹ These figures also support the assertion that during the period 1949–61 opposition to the

communist regime in the GDR manifested itself in the form of a mass exodus to the FRG.⁸⁰ Nevertheless, as Christian Joppke perceptively argues, the shift from mere “exit” to “politicized exit” contributed decisively to the sparking of the East German revolution of 1989.⁸¹ This shift occurred in 1989, in the particular context of the “snowballing effect” produced by the political changes in Poland and Hungary. As shown below, when a growing number of would-be emigrants voiced openly their will to leave the GDR for the FRG, their protest had serious implications on the stability of the SED regime.

Apart from the “exit” option, one should note that in the case of the former GDR there existed an intricate relationship between “voice” and “loyalty,” which eventually led to the birth of a “critical loyalty” option, which envisaged a reform of the system but by no means a renunciation of state socialism. A majority of the dissident intellectuals who adopted a critical stance towards the SED regime and decided at the same time not to flee to the FRG did not put into question the “socialist order” in the GDR. Moreover, “critical loyalty” implied a certain degree of identification with “socialism” and the GDR. Yet, the regime was hostile even to such forms of limited criticism. In the context of the 1956 “thaw,” some revisionist intellectuals mildly criticized the regime. Two examples in this respect are Wolfgang Harich, philosophy professor at the Humboldt University and Walter Janka, head of the *Aufbau Verlag*. Harich, who envisaged a reform of both party and society while remaining loyal to the regime, was arrested and put on trial. In 1957, Harich was sentenced to ten years in prison for establishing a “conspiratorial counter-revolutionary group” and was released from prison in 1964. As for Janka, he was sentenced the same year, 1957, to five years in prison and was eventually freed in 1960.⁸²

In the post-1961 period, East German dissent was born from four main currents of oppositionist thinking: (1) pacifist groups

of “conscientious objectors” who opted for non-armed military service after the 1962 introduction of universal military service in the GDR; (2) groups of young Christians and student communities influenced by Latin American liberation theology and anti-war activism; (3) groups which carried out social work with marginalized people under the shelter of the protestant churches; and (4) left-wing intellectuals and alternative groups of artists.⁸³ Yet, two individuals distinguished themselves in the mid-1960s for their dissident stances: Robert Havemann, a respected professor of physical chemistry at the Humboldt University, and Wolf Biermann, a gifted singer and songwriter. In 1963–64, Havemann gave a series of lectures which proved very popular with students in which he criticized dogmatic Marxism-Leninism. As a consequence, he was professionally marginalized, harassed and kept under surveillance by the Stasi, and put on house arrest during the period November 1976–May 1978. Until his death in 1982, Havemann was one of the most prominent critics of the SED regime from within the revisionist camp.⁸⁴ As for Biermann, his ballads were a pungent satire on the miseries of everyday life in East Germany and thus he was banned from publishing and performing in public as early as 1965.⁸⁵ The ban lasted some eleven years. Eventually, Biermann was allowed to perform again in public in 1976. In the same year he was permitted to travel to West Germany for a series of concerts. After a concert he gave in Cologne on 13 November 1976, the East German authorities decided to strip Biermann of his GDR citizenship and thus forced him into exile.⁸⁶

Biermann’s forced expatriation triggered a reaction from the GDR literary establishment, which issued a protest note signed by prominent writers including Christa Wolf, Stefan Heym, Heiner Müller, Volker Braun, and Jurek Becker. The protest, although moderate in tone and limited in scope, was supported by over one hundred writers and artists.⁸⁷ However, the

unprecedented solidarity of the GDR literary and artistic elite against the expulsion of Biermann did not contribute to the structuring of dissent in East Germany. On the contrary, the effect was that the GDR authorities managed by the end of the 1970s to suppress dissident voices from within the literary, artistic and academic milieus. Actually, the Biermann affair showed that those writers and artists willing to engage in dissident actions had only two options: either professional marginalization in East Germany or emigration to West Germany. The dire consequence of the Biermann affair was that many disillusioned young writers and artists left the GDR and settled in the FRG, while those writers and artists who decided not to emigrate, some because of their attachment to socialist ideas, withdrew into a sort of “inner exile.” As a matter of fact, the Biermann affair and the post-Biermann wave of emigration to West Germany indicated that the SED regime was able to control the dissident voices from within literary and artistic circles and thus hamper the development of dissident networks in such milieus.

However, in the 1980s dissent and opposition emerged from concern with world peace and environmental protection, as well as from social work with marginalized people. According to Joppke, the emergence of the peace movement in East Germany was favored by: (1) the appearance of the West German peace movement, which served as a model; (2) GDR anti-NATO propaganda, which induced fear of nuclear war among the population; (3) the strong pro-peace component of East German foreign policy, which in turn demanded caution and restraint in dealing with the peace groups active within the country; and (4) the support offered by the Protestant Church in the GDR to the autonomous peace groups.⁸⁸ Thus, the peace movement emerged in the early 1980s from various groups such as “Women for Peace” (*Frauen für den Frieden*), “Initiative for a Social Civil Service” (*Initiative für einen Sozialen Friedensdienst*), or “Definitely for

Peace” (*Konkret für den Frieden*), which organized seminars and workshops.⁸⁹ Towards the mid-1980s, some of the more active peace groups decided to engage in activities related to protection of human rights, thus leaving the shelter offered by the church and undertaking the risks incurred. A first group that advocated issues related to both peace and human rights was “Initiative for Peace and Human Rights” (*Initiative Frieden und Menschenrechte*—IFM), which was established in 1985.⁹⁰ This group, which gathered the most significant dissident voices in the GDR, was considerably weakened after the arrest of its leaders following their participation, bearing unofficial banners, in the official demonstration commemorating the death of the socialist leaders Karl Liebknecht and Rosa Luxemburg on 17 January 1988. Having to choose between stiff prison terms and emigration, the IFM leaders eventually opted for emigration.⁹¹

In fact, East German dissent was faced in the late 1980s with a thorny dilemma, which could be defined briefly as the growing tension between “critical loyalty” and “politicized exit.” On the one hand, “critical loyalty” implied, as shown above, a certain degree of identification with “socialism” and the GDR regime. On the other hand, “politicized exit” meant the structuring of emigration-oriented groups determined to struggle for the legalization of emigration. A first group of this kind was the Berlin Citizenship Group (*Staatsbürgerschaftsgruppe*), established in 1987. However, as Joppke observes, the fate of this group demonstrated that such initiatives were short-lived: the group practically disappeared in early 1988 because its members had already left the GDR.⁹² Yet, unofficial activities by various groups in East Berlin and in other cities, such as Leipzig, Dresden, and Jena, intensified throughout 1988. In Leipzig, the Church of St. Nicholas (*Nikolaikirche*) became known for the peace prayer services which gathered regime opponents and would-be emigrants,

and rose to international fame in the autumn of 1989 as the center of the peaceful revolution in that city.

In the context of the political changes already under way in Poland and Hungary, the opposition groups in the GDR managed to coordinate their activity and observe the voting process on the occasion of the municipal and local elections on 7 May 1989. Mobilization by these opposition groups led to a dissenting vote amounting to some 10 percent of the total number of votes casted, which contradicted the traditional pro-regime vote of 98–99 percent for the official list. As a consequence, in some areas the authorities falsified the results of the popular vote and reduced the number of negative votes to the usual 2 percent.⁹³ The falsifying of the results of the May 1989 elections had a twofold effect on opposition politics: (1) it offered the opportunity to openly criticize the SED regime for electoral fraud; and (2) it acted as a catalyst for the various opposition groups scattered throughout the country towards the structuring of an opposition movement.

Besides, conjunctural factors led to an unexpected unfolding of events. The political changes in Poland and Hungary permitted a growing number of East German citizens to flee to the West. As mentioned in the chapter on Hungary, on 27 June 1989 the Austrian minister of foreign affairs, Alois Mock, and his Hungarian counterpart, Gyula Horn, met for a ceremony that symbolized the dismantling of the Iron Curtain sector between the two countries. During the ceremony, the two ministers jointly cut a portion of the barbed wire fence erected between Austria and Hungary. The subsequent opening of the border between these countries enabled numerous East German citizens to leave their country for West Germany via Hungary and Austria. Moreover, in August–September 1989 the West German embassies in Budapest, Prague, and Warsaw were confronted with a refugee crisis as hundreds of GDR citizens sought refuge in these embassies in a desperate

attempt to emigrate to the FRG. “Exit” was shortly to become the most serious threat to the very existence of the GDR.

Such a mass exodus prompted the mobilization of opposition groups within the GDR. Thus, 9 September 1989 saw the establishment of the most prominent opposition initiative in East Germany, the New Forum (*Neues Forum*), which defined itself as a platform for social dialogue and not as a political organization of the opposition.⁹⁴ Other notable groups established in September–October 1989 were Democracy Now (*Demokratie jetzt*) and Democratic Awakening (*Demokratischer Aufbruch*). The former was established on 12 September 1989 as a “citizen movement” (*Bürgerbewegung*),⁹⁵ while the latter was founded in late September the same year “as part of the political opposition in the GDR.”⁹⁶ An organization that claimed party status from the outset was the Social Democratic Party in the GDR (*Sozialdemokratische Partei in der DDR*–SDP), officially established on 7 October 1989.⁹⁷ On the whole, Leipzig emerged as the most rebellious city in East Germany. According to Joppke, the East German revolution of 1989 “was *made* in Leipzig [original emphasis].”⁹⁸ As noted before, on 25 September 1989 a series of thirteen consecutive demonstrations opened in this city, organized every Monday until 18 December the same year. These Monday demonstrations in Leipzig contributed significantly to the demise of the East German dictatorship and the subsequent unification of Germany.⁹⁹

As mentioned earlier, Honecker was ousted from power on 18 October 1989, only a few days after expressing his confidence in the socialist future of the GDR, but Krenz was not considered a solution to the growing crisis. At the same time, the mass escape of thousands of East Germans put unprecedented pressure on the SED leadership and further mobilized the domestic opposition forces. Mass demonstrations multiplied throughout the GDR. During the month of October 1989, as many as 330 demonstrations and mass

rallies were organized in different places around the country. In November 1989, the number of such demonstrations and mass rallies rose to 871.¹⁰⁰ According to Stasi figures, between 16 October and 5 November some 400 demonstrations and mass rallies gathering over two million people in total took place in East Germany.¹⁰¹ The slogan “We want out!” shouted by numerous demonstrators, best epitomized a decisive shift in terms of community political culture: “politicized exit” ultimately determined the breakdown of communist rule in East Germany. Faced with resolute demands to observe the freedom of movement, the SED leadership made a historic decision to open its borders with West Germany on the night of 9 to 10 November 1989. While “politicized exit” determined the fall of the Berlin Wall, the power vacuum that followed contributed decisively to the awakening of a dormant sentiment of national unity among ordinary people in the GDR.

The fall of the Berlin Wall also marked a return to political competition. New political parties and citizen groups emerged rapidly. Roundtable talks between the regime and the opposition, aimed at creating a framework for the new political system, opened on 7 December 1989 in East Berlin and lasted until 12 March 1990.¹⁰² The public’s interest, however, focused on the political competition in the light of the forthcoming elections of 18 March 1990. The landslide victory of the Alliance for Germany (*Allianz für Deutschland*), which gathered 48 percent of the votes cast, indicated that an overwhelming majority of the East German population simply opted for the shortest road towards German unification. In fact, the final results of the March 1990 elections showed that approximately 75 percent of the voting electorate identified itself with West Germany.¹⁰³ As Joppke perceptively puts it: “In the elections of 18 March 1990, the people dissolved the [East German] state and chose another.”¹⁰⁴ The GDR officially ceased to exist on 3 October 1990, when it was incorporated into the FRG.

Reflections on the “Peaceful Revolution” in East Germany

In its quest to create a system superior to the one in West Germany, the communist regime in East Germany established a dictatorship based on “care” and “coercion,” as Jarausch shows. “Care” represented a fundamental element of the SED strategy of legitimation. In order to overcome its legitimacy deficit, the regime concentrated on expanding the welfare state measures and ended by living well beyond its means. On the one hand, the SED leadership concentrated on providing for the basic needs of working-class families, but in accordance to party leaders’ view, which had been shaped during their political socialization in the crisis years of the Weimar Republic. The rising expectations of the GDR population, which resulted from the multifaceted process of modernization promoted by the same SED leadership, were overlooked. Thus, although the communist regime made considerable efforts to achieve legitimacy through the expansion of the welfare state it envisioned, the results were disappointing. By the late 1980s, it had become clear that there was no chance whatsoever that East Germany could catch up with West Germany as far as the living standard of the population was concerned. Relative frustration continued to accumulate at the societal level, and a growing number of East German citizens became convinced that they could live a successful and meaningful life only in the West.

“Coercion” was employed constantly to control society and ensure the political survival of the power elite. Although much has been written on the wrongdoings of the infamous East German *Ministerium für Staatssicherheit*, one should stress that during the 1970s and 1980s the SED leadership limited the use of sheer force for implementing its policies. While the secret police kept the population under surveillance, the focus of its activity was

prevention and not repression, with the exception of attempts to cross the border into West Germany, when deadly force was used up to the very last days of the regime. At the same time, the power elite in East Berlin was not prepared to use large-scale violence against the bulk of the population and counted on Soviet tanks to restore order in such situations, as was the case in June 1953. As long as the Soviets were there to protect the SED leadership against contestation from within, the regime was safe. As Brezhnev allegedly put it: "Without us, there would be no GDR." The East German power elite received a major blow when a fundamental change of policy occurred in the Kremlin after the coming to power of Gorbachev in March 1985. In fact, the GDR, whose creation was intimately linked to the early Cold War logic of confrontation, proved to be the most vulnerable to the change of course in Moscow.

Apart from the change of Soviet policy towards the communist regimes in ECE, i.e., the renunciation of the Brezhnev Doctrine, the political changes in Poland and Hungary heavily influenced the course of events in the GDR. To this, one should add as an internal factor the constant fascination of East German citizens with the West German way of life. Beginning in the summer of 1989, this domestic factor determined the mobilization of numerous GDR citizens who simply wanted to leave their country and settle in the FRG. Taking advantage of the opening of the Hungarian border with Austria, thousands of GDR citizens crossed into Austria. Moreover, in August–September 1989 the West German embassies in Budapest, Prague, and Warsaw were confronted with a refugee crisis as hundreds of GDR citizens sought refuge in these embassies in a desperate attempt to emigrate to the FRG. "Exit" became shortly the most serious threat to the very existence of the GDR.

The mass exodus prompted the mobilization and structuring of opposition groups within the GDR. Opposition groups such

as the New Forum, Democracy Now, and Democratic Awakening, became particularly active in September–October 1989. The same September 1989, Leipzig emerged as the most rebellious city in East Germany. In a volatile domestic and foreign political context, Honecker's replacement proved futile. The mass escape of thousands of East Germans and the mass demonstrations converged in purpose. The slogan "We want out!" shouted by numerous demonstrators expressed a decisive shift in terms of community political culture: "exit" became a major political argument. Ultimately, "politicized exit" determined the breakdown of the SED rule in the GDR. In fact, the end of communism in East Germany, as well as in the whole of ECE, is best epitomized by the opening of the Berlin Wall on 9 to 10 November 1989. Under popular pressure, the infamous Berlin Wall was dismantled soon afterwards. The fall of the Wall paved the way for a rapid reunification of Germany. The political act of 3 October 1990 marked not only the reunification of Germany, but also the end of the GDR as a state.

CHAPTER FIVE

Czechoslovakia

The “velvet revolution” in Czechoslovakia concluded the second phase of the 1989 revolutions in ECE. This phase consisted of the demise of the “welfare dictatorships” in East Germany and Czechoslovakia, although in the latter case the term is more appropriate for the Czech lands than for Slovakia. In the aftermath of World War II, the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia (CPCz) came to power under the lead of Klement Gottwald, the Stalinist leader that had shepherded the party since February 1929, through what has been remembered since as the Prague coup of February 1948. A first wave of contestation from below emerged in June 1953 as a reaction to the currency reform introduced by the regime, with the most significant working-class protest occurring in the industrial city of Plzeň. However, after this outburst of working-class discontent the communist regime was not confronted with other major crises. On the contrary, Czechoslovakia appeared to be a silent and subservient

Notes for this chapter begin on page 383.

satellite of the Soviet Union for the subsequent decade. It came as a surprise for the Soviets and for their most faithful allies in the Soviet bloc that in the late 1960s, under the leadership of a newly-elected first secretary, Alexander Dubček, the CPCz launched a bold program of reforms. Known since as the Prague Spring, the project aimed at reforming the system from above. In August 1968, the Soviet-led military invasion brutally put an end to this experiment and initiated the so-called “normalization,” which represented in fact a return to political stagnation.

The period August 1968–November 1989 was perceived and remembered differently by the Czechs and the Slovaks. Civil society experienced a rebirth in the Czech lands during the Prague Spring, while in Slovakia it was just emerging. In terms of economic development, the Czech lands were conspicuously more developed than Slovakia, which was industrialized and urbanized mostly under communist rule and especially during the period 1968–89. Moreover, the political agendas of the Slovak and Czech communists differed significantly. The federalization of Czechoslovakia represented a victory of the national-communist project of the Slovak communists, and was the only major political decision made during the Prague Spring which survived the invasion and the subsequent “normalization.” Although the policy of “normalization” could not hamper the structuring of dissident groups in the Czech lands, of which Charter 77 was the most prominent, the communist regime in Czechoslovakia was only the fourth in a row to collapse in 1989. Given all the above, this chapter discusses the aggregation of structural, conjunctural and nation-specific factors for the case of former Czechoslovakia in order to explain its particular position within the 1989 sequence of collapse of state socialism in ECE.

Structural Factors

Economic Failure

Among the countries in ECE that entered the Soviet sphere of influence in 1944–45, Czechoslovakia was second only to East Germany in terms of economic development. Soviet-occupied Germany, however, faced the tremendous task of postwar reconstruction, to which the systematic dismantling of its industrial capacities by the Soviets added an extra economic burden. Thus, Czechoslovakia after the end of World War II was in the singular position of supplying the less developed “fraternal” regimes in ECE with machinery, industrial equipment and, equally important, weaponry.¹ As a Western analyst rightly observes, Czechoslovakia had a “uniquely privileged position as an industrially advanced country within a largely backward socialist bloc.”²

In the immediate aftermath of World War II, the Czechoslovak state nationalized some 3,000 businesses belonging to the mining, metallurgical and food industries, as well as in the banking and insurance sectors, which accounted for 61.2 percent of the total number of people employed in industry.³ In order to accelerate the postwar economic recovery of the country, a Two-Year Plan 1947–48 was launched on 1 January 1947.⁴ After the communist takeover in February 1948, the power elite in Prague started to emulate the Stalinist model of economic development under central planning. Thus, a large-scale nationalization aiming at eliminating private businesses, especially in sectors such as coal mining, metallurgy and heavy industry, was launched in parallel with the collectivization of agriculture. The second wave of nationalization, launched in April 1948, affected all businesses with more than 50 employees in the construction and food

industries, the transport sector, printing and the book industry, tourism, foreign trade and domestic wholesale trade.⁵ The private sector, which comprised the small businesses, services and retail trade sectors, was gradually reduced in size. By 1950, two thirds of the retail trade belonged to the “socialist” sector, and by 1952 the small businesses sector employed only some 50,000 workers as compared to circa 500,000 workers employed solely by small manufacturing workshops back in 1948.⁶ Turning back to the issue of central planning, it should be mentioned that throughout the communist period the Czechoslovak economy was conducted according to the following central plans: First Five-Year Plan (FYP) 1949–53; Annual Plans for the years 1954 and 1955; Second FYP 1956–60; Third FYP 1961–65; Fourth FYP 1966–70; Fifth FYP 1971–75; Sixth FYP 1976–80; Seventh FYP 1981–85 and Eighth FYP 1986–90 (interrupted in 1989).

During the First FYP 1949–53, the economy underwent major structural changes. Economic integration into the Soviet bloc implied the breaking of traditional economic links with Western countries and a reorientation towards the bloc countries. With the creation of the Council of Mutual Economic Assistance (CMEA) in 1949, Czechoslovakia became one of the most vocal advocates of enhanced specialization and integration at Soviet bloc level.⁷ At the same time, the “revolutions from above” carried out by the communist regimes throughout ECE put a special emphasis on rapid industrialization. The power elites in communist countries whose economies initially lagged behind those of East Germany or Czechoslovakia – Romania is a telling example in this respect – showed little understanding for this argument in favor of economic specialization and integration. Benefiting in many cases from Czechoslovak technical support, these countries inaugurated instead their own production of standard machinery and equipment. In the view of an insider with an economic background, Czechoslovak industry contributed to “the creation

of parallel, superfluous, and at times unprofitable productions in a few socialist countries and thereby to the emergence of disproportions in the socialist world economy.”⁸

The transformation undergone by the Czechoslovak economy during the First FYP produced serious imbalances. For instance, the quantity of money in circulation rose significantly, while the regime had real difficulties in increasing the supply of consumer goods in order to absorb the excess money. This led to the implementation of a currency reform on 1 June 1953, which drastically affected the savings of numerous working-class families.⁹ As a direct result, in June 1953 the communist authorities were faced with a major wave of working-class unrest, of which the most notable example was the revolt of the workers in Plzeň.¹⁰ At the same time, the death of Stalin on 5 March 1953 had a major impact on all Soviet bloc countries. The new power elite in Moscow decided for a change of course aimed at reducing the growing imbalances in the economy and improving the living standard of the population. The June 1953 working-class revolts in Czechoslovakia and East Germany indicated clearly that the economic condition of the working class throughout the Soviet bloc was of prime importance for the survival of the communist regimes in those countries. In Czechoslovakia, the authorities decided for a 16 percent reduction in investment simultaneously with the withdrawal of a new and stricter labor code. According to official data, over the period 1953–54 personal consumption grew by 14 percent, while real wages grew by only 10 percent.¹¹ Following the two Annual Plans for the years 1954 and 1955, a Second FYP, covering the period 1956–60, was launched. This FYP was more realistically devised, and thus the central planners managed to reach a certain degree of economic stability, although the economic imbalances induced by the previous FYP 1949–53 were not solved. By the end of the Second FYP, the regime could proudly claim that the supply of consumer goods had increased,

which generated an improvement in the living standard of the population: real wages had grown by 17 percent and real incomes had grown by 26 percent, while the cost of living had been reduced by an annual average of 1.8 percent.¹²

During the Third FYP 1961–65, the Czechoslovak economy was faced with growing difficulties, which eventually led to a crisis in 1962–63. There was little concern with economic slowdown back in March 1960, when the party leadership proudly announced that the target of the Second FYP was already fulfilled.¹³ However, a series of factors related to the international economic conjuncture, at both Soviet bloc and international levels, seriously affected the Czechoslovak economy during the Third FYP. In addition, plan targets failed to be achieved in key sectors such as coal, steel and heavy machinery because of long-term domestic factors. The regime decided to cut investment in order to avoid going into foreign debt or, even worse, affecting the living standard of the population and facing social unrest again. As a consequence, the national income fell significantly in 1963. Taking as a basis for comparison the national income in 1960, calculated on the basis of that year's prices, the evolution over the following years was: 1960 – 100 percent; 1961 – 106.8 percent; 1962 – 108.3 percent; 1963 – 105.9 percent; and 1964 – 106.6 percent.¹⁴ The drastic cut in investment, however, led to disruption in industry and the broader economy.

The failure to fulfill the targets of the Third FYP prompted a heated debate at power elite level regarding the adoption of a set of economic reforms focused on the improvement of the management system, without questioning the principle of the centrally planned economy.¹⁵ Thus, in 1963 the regime appointed a commission to formulate concrete proposals for economic reform. The commission was headed by Ota Šik, the director of the Institute of Economics of the Czechoslovak Academy of Sciences. The basic principles of the economic reform were made public in October 1964 and adopted by the CC of the CPCz

during a meeting held on 27–29 January 1965.¹⁶ The plan of economic reforms, known as the New Economic Model, focused primarily on new methods of planning and ways of improving the management system. Although the CC of the CPCz apparently committed itself to the economic reforms, in practice the implementation of the New Economic Model proved to be slow.

The Fourth FYP 1966–70 opened under the sign of economic reform, but ended in an atmosphere of uncertainty regarding the economic “normalization” following the suppression of the Prague Spring. During this short-lived period of reforms, the ideas of combining plan and market were set forth in the Action Program of the CPCz, whose economic section was authored by Šik.¹⁷ The main provisions of the Action Program with regard to central issues such as production, consumption or decision-making in the economic sphere are presented below:

The democratization program of the economy places special emphasis on ensuring the independence of enterprises and enterprise groupings and their relative independence from state bodies; the full implementation of the right of consumers to determine their consumption patterns and lifestyles; the right to choose jobs freely; and the right and opportunity of various groups of working people and different social groups to formulate and defend their economic interests in shaping economic policy. ... Decision-making about the plan and the economic policy of the state must be both a process of mutual confrontation and harmonization of different interests, that is, the interests of enterprises, consumers, employers, different social groups of the population, nations, and so forth.¹⁸

The Soviet-led invasion of Czechoslovakia in August 1968 put an end to the debates concerning economic reform. In the economic realm, “normalization” manifested itself through the criticism of the reform program set forth by Šik. According to Brus, one can

identify two stages of the “normalization” of the Czechoslovak economy in the post-1968 period: (1) from August 1968 to April 1969; and (2) from April 1969 onwards.¹⁹ During the first stage, the focus was on shifting away from the incipient political pluralism set forth by the Action Program of April 1968 and returning to the leading role of the party. Over this period, the authorities did not take resolute measures to hamper the putting into practice of the reform program. During the second stage, the reforms were put on hold indefinitely. The mandatory plan indicators, which were reintroduced in mid-1969, harbingered economic recentralization.²⁰ Upon his coming to power, Gustav Husák made of economic stability one of his main objectives. Consequently, the reform program was abandoned during the Fifth FYP 1971–75. Instead, the regime adopted a strategy centered on economic incentives and social benefits aimed at ensuring societal quiescence. According to the official figures, the period 1970–80 could be termed as one of economic success. The table below presents the evolution of the annual growth rates of national income and real incomes over this period.²¹

Year	1970	1971	1972	1973	1974	1975	1976	1977	1978	1979	1980
National Income	5.7	5.5	5.7	5.2	5.9	6.2	3.6	4.2	4.3	3.1	3.0
Real Incomes	2.8	5.9	6.3	6.2	4.2	3.1	3.9	3.0	2.1	0.7	0.7

During the Seventh FYP 1981–85, economic difficulties surfaced again. The reasons for slowdown were multifaceted. A major domestic cause was the continuation of “extensive development” and the postponement of a resolute shift to “intensive development.”²² Due to favorable external conditions,

such difficulties were overcome throughout the 1970s. Thus, Czechoslovakia benefited from convenient conditions for Western loans concomitantly with a preferential treatment by the Soviet Union with regard to oil supplies. In 1981–82, however, these external conditions changed completely. Western credits were stopped after the declaration of Martial Law in Poland in December 1981, while the Soviets significantly reduced their oil supplies beginning in 1982. Although the authorities were forced to apply some restrictions on consumption of oil products, the living standard was maintained. The price to be paid by the regime was the slow but steady decline of the Czechoslovak economy, which occurred in spite of some achievements in the foreign trade sector.

When the Eighth FYP was launched in 1986, Czechoslovakia was facing the same problem as the rest of the CMEA countries: lack of competitiveness on international markets. As Brus convincingly argues, the economies of the Soviet bloc countries did not manage to produce industrial goods that could compete on the international markets. Research and development of new products implied increased capacity to adapt to rapid changes in demand, and flexibility was exactly what the centrally planned economies in ECE were missing. In general, the CMEA countries were able to produce standard industrial goods on the basis of licenses bought from the West.²³ However, such products became obsolete in a rather short period of time because of the incapacity of the respective countries to innovate especially in the industrial goods sector. In spite of these problems, Czechoslovakia, alongside East Germany, performed better in the economic sector than the late industrializing communist countries such as Bulgaria or Romania. During the Seventh and Eighth FYP periods, the central planners kept investments at a relatively low level in order to increase consumption. Consequently, in 1986–89 social consumption grew in real terms by 5 percent annually, while

personal consumption grew by 3 percent annually.²⁴ Thus, even in 1988–89 the communist ruling elite could still provide concrete evidence that the living standard was maintained. Moreover, the foreign debt of the country, amounting to USD 7.9 billion, was relatively low at the end of 1989.²⁵

In light of the above, it is reasonable to argue that in the case of former Czechoslovakia relative, and not absolute, dissatisfaction with the economic performance of the regime contributed to the demise of communist rule. A series of surveys carried out officially by the Institute for Public Opinion Research over the period 1972–89 support such an assertion. Asked to assess the standard of living in Czechoslovakia, only 29 percent of respondents answered in 1989 that their situation had bettered over the previous five years as compared to 46 percent in 1985. At the same time, 36 percent of respondents stated in 1989 that their situation had worsened as compared to only 22 percent in 1985. When asked to predict the evolution of their standard of living over the next five years, 32 percent of respondents thought in 1989 that their situation would improve as compared to 43 percent in 1985. Finally, 25 percent of respondents believed in 1989 that their situation would worsen as compared to 23 percent in 1985.²⁶

Thus, if one applies the theory of short-term setbacks to the Czechoslovak case, the situation in the late 1980s can be explained as follows. A “golden period” of higher consumption and rising expectations (1971–80) was followed by a period of relative stagnation with regard to the living standard of the population (1981–89), which led to a rise in societal dissatisfaction with the regime. One should not neglect the fact that relative dissatisfaction was also rooted in the comparison between Czechoslovakia and neighboring Western countries such as Austria or West Germany. The spread of television also influenced the patterns of consumption. Especially in the 1970s and 1980s, people could watch the TV programs broadcast by the Austrian and West

German TV stations and compare the goods and services advertised in Western media with the limited domestic offer of goods and services.²⁷ The initiation of the last, i.e., the eighth FYP under communist rule in 1986 coincided with heated debates regarding the need for a “restructuring” of the Soviet economy in accordance with the views of Gorbachev. The enormous interest shown by the Czechs and Slovaks in the ideas of economic reform set forth by Gorbachev clearly indicated that certain ideas put forward during the Prague Spring, which had been suppressed but never forgotten in the post-1968 period, were surfacing again. More precisely, it was about the close connection between economic development and political reform.

Ideological Decay

When the Czechoslovak communists came to power in February 1948, they had already experienced a prolonged period of common socialization in a Stalinist political culture. This period had been inaugurated in February 1929, when the Stalinist faction of Gottwald rose to party leadership. In H. Gordon Skilling’s words: “Ever since the Prague coup in 1948, indeed, Czechoslovakia has been regarded in the West as the ‘loyal’ or ‘stable’ satellite, offering no spark of resistance to the general line of the USSR.”²⁸ Independent-path policies and national-communism were notions alien to the political culture of Czechoslovak communism because of the traditional subservience of the Czechoslovak communists to the Kremlin and the intricate identity issues that hindered a process of Czechoslovak nation-building. Towards the late 1960s, however, a new generation of communists pushed for the reformation of the CPCz. After Alexander Dubček replaced Antonín Novotný as first secretary of the CPCz,²⁹ a program of

reforms from above, aimed at stirring economic growth and introducing long-awaited political changes, was initiated.³⁰

The Soviet-led intervention of August 1968 put an end not only to the CPCz's attempts at reforming the system, but also to the hopes of the many who thought that "actually existing socialism" could be reformed after all. In his book-length conversation with Gorbachev, Mlynář, one of the prominent figures of the Prague Spring, emphasizes the profound trauma experienced by the reform communists in Czechoslovakia in the aftermath of the 1968 WTO intervention. According to Mlynář, the Prague Spring was not an expression of a national-communism envisaging a break with Moscow, but a genuine attempt at reforming the entire socialist world:

The fact is that precisely because of their loyalty to the ideals of socialism as a universal supranational value, because of their concepts that reform would serve to bring about gradual change in the entire socialist commonwealth, because otherwise it would not have been possible to revitalize socialism in one small country by itself – because of all that, the reform communists proved to be totally disarmed in relation to the actual reality then in the surrounding countries.³¹

According to Mlynář, the failure of the Prague Spring led to widespread disillusionment, for the result was: "Disbelief in the possibility of reforming a system of the Soviet type along democratic lines and at the initiative of the communist parties that were in power."³² As is well known, the suppression of the Prague Spring was followed by a "normalization" campaign, based on selective punishment of former incumbents and on a "new social contract" offered to the population.

Due to the reforms from above initiated by the CPCz during the Prague Spring, the population manifested a renewed interest

in politics. In this respect, it is worth quoting Oldřich Černík, another leader of the Prague Spring, who defended the reform program of the CPCz at the famous Dresden meeting of March 1968 by pointing towards the unprecedented mobilization of the population and its participation in the political activities organized by the party: "Comrades, since February 1948 we have not had such waves of political interest within our party, such activity of the working class and intelligentsia, as we now witness. Thousands of meetings are being held, in factories, villages and cities." According to his testimony, the level of participation in party meetings was truly impressive: "The halls are overcrowded, and the party members are implementing and defending the policy of the party. Millions of people attend the party meetings and other gatherings. For years we have had a situation in which halls had been empty, passivity was evident and increasing."³³

In Václav Havel's view, one of the most important achievements of the Prague Spring was the new meaning conferred on concepts such as "national confidence" or "autonomy:" "Often to their own surprise, people began to feel civic and national confidence; they began to feel proud and autonomous." The CPCz managed to achieve a limited legitimacy due to the fact that its actions were perceived by large segments of the population as being directed towards serving the general interest. Nonetheless, it was the same CPCz that failed to behave in a sovereign manner during the period that preceded the WTO invasion, Havel's argument continues: "If the leadership had also behaved with pride and autonomy, they would have had this enormous background of support in society."³⁴ Havel's criticism targeted especially the decision of the CPCz leadership not to mobilize the army and the population, which affected the sense of national pride. In comparison, even the way Tito and Ceaușescu acted in support of the sovereignty of their countries seemed to him preferable.³⁵ With regard to the "dying of the faith" in the aftermath of the

Soviet-led invasion, Bradley Abrams perceptively notes: “It was not until 1968, and the failure of the Prague Spring’s hope to create a liberal Marxism often called ‘socialism with a human face,’ that it became evident to many that Marxism could no longer serve as a means either for legitimizing communist rule to the public or as a way for the regimes to legitimize their own rule to themselves.”³⁶

In the post-1968 period, the Husák regime aimed at establishing a Czechoslovak version of a “welfare dictatorship” based on “care and coercion” under the protection of the Soviet troops. Since “normalization” was imposed from “above and abroad,” the authorities adopted a strategy centered on economic incentives and social benefits in order to co-opt large strata of the population. As already shown, the recipe for ensuring social peace proved to be simple and effective. Society was offered what some named a “new social contract,” while others have called it a “tacit social contract.”³⁷ This tacit deal consisted in an acceptable standard of living and various welfare provisions offered in exchange for compliance and consent, in a context in which both regime and society paid lip service to the main tenets of Marxism-Leninism.³⁸ Indeed, this tacit deal worked well in Czechoslovakia, and thus the regime succeeded in pacifying society during the 1970s by increasing consumption and continuing the policy of industrialization and urbanization, which was directed particularly to Slovakia. As illustrated above, the Czechoslovak economy was able to sustain such a policy throughout the 1970s. Consequently, the regime successfully avoided outbursts of social dissatisfaction of the sort the Polish regime experienced during the same time period.

Havel’s story about the greengrocer who places in the window of his shop the slogan “Workers of the world, unite!” captures wonderfully the meaning of the tacit deal mentioned above, in which both rulers and ruled have ceased to believe in the

revolutionary ideology but continue to entertain the illusion that ideology still matters. Havel’s insightful observation points out that it was not a genuine ideological commitment that made that greengrocer place the slogan in the shop window, but the simple fact that since everybody was doing it he might have got into trouble if he refused to comply: “He does it because these things must be done if one is to get along in life. It is one of the thousands of details that guarantee him a relatively tranquil life ‘in harmony with society,’ as they say.”³⁹ Thus, ideology became only a façade, while the regime managed to survive due to the tacit deal achieved under Soviet protection: “The sign helps the greengrocer to conceal from himself the low foundations of his obedience, at the same time concealing the low foundations of power. It hides them behind the façade of something high. And that something is *ideology* [original emphasis].”⁴⁰

Although ideology lost its mobilizing power in the aftermath of the 1968 failed experiment in “socialism with human face,” the “tacit deal” discussed above appealed to large segments of the population. Many chose to behave like Havel’s greengrocer. In such a context, contestation of the regime came from those strata that benefited the most from the cultural opening during the Prague Spring, mainly the intellectuals, professionals and students. Dissident groups such as Charter 77 did emerge in the 1970s, but their activity gained momentum after the coming to power of Gorbachev in the Soviet Union. Students proved to be the least affected by the perverse logic of the “tacit deal” and thus their potential for protest was quite high by the end of the 1980s. Ultimately, it was a demonstration organized by the students in Prague that initiated the breakdown of communist rule in Czechoslovakia, as will be further discussed.

With regard to the inception of the 1989 “velvet revolution” in Czechoslovakia, Garton Ash notes: “Students started it. Small groups of them had been active for at least a year. They edited

faculty magazines. They organized discussion clubs. They worked at the borderline between official and unofficial life. Many had contacts with the opposition, all read samizdat.” As he further underlines, the demonstration organized by the students on 17 November 1989, which was brutally suppressed by the riot police, sparked the Czechoslovak “velvet revolution.” “But they also worked through the official youth organization, the SSM [*Socialistický Svaz Mládeže*—Socialist Youth Union]. It was through the SSM that they got permission to hold a demonstration in Prague on 17 November, to mark the fiftieth anniversary of the martyrdom of Jan Opletal, a Czech student murdered by the Nazis.”⁴¹ The “dying of the faith” at societal level partially explains the radicalization of certain segments of the population, especially intellectuals and students. At the same time, the “dying of the faith” cannot fully explain why the authorities conceded to open talks with the opposition groups in the aftermath of the student demonstration of 17 November instead of sticking to power under the protection of the army and secret police. In order to provide a convincing answer in this respect, it is necessary to examine the conjunctural factors and to address the issue of regime political culture.

Conjunctural Factors

As has been argued before, conjunctural factors affected differently each of the six countries under discussion. Moreover, various conjunctural factors were at work in each country in the particular context of the year 1989. While in Poland the “snowballing effect” did not take place, in Hungary there were special conjunctural factors, such as the massive mobilization for the rights of Hungarians living in neighboring countries or the environmental effects of the dam to be built on the Danube. In the late 1980s,

very much as in East Germany, communist Czechoslovakia was especially vulnerable to two kinds of external conjunctural factors: (1) the political vision in Moscow; and (2) the unfolding of events in the other communist countries in ECE. In other words, the collapse of communist rule in Czechoslovakia was directly influenced by the two external conjunctural factors invoked in the case of East Germany: the “Gorbachev factor” and the “snowballing effect.” Let us examine the way these factors worked in the particular Czechoslovak setting.

During the 1970s and 1980s, the communist regimes in East Germany and Czechoslovakia sought to establish “welfare dictatorships” in their respective countries. As Jarausch convincingly argues, “care” and “coercion” were simultaneously considered and observed as pivotal elements of the relationship between regime and society. It should be stressed that in both countries such a political vision came into being after the program of reforms from above – be it more timid as in East Germany under Ulbricht, or quite bold as in Czechoslovakia under Dubček – was stopped with the support, or after the direct intervention, of Moscow. Furthermore, the Husák and Honecker regimes were both brought to power in the context of the Brezhnev doctrine of “limited sovereignty.” Therefore, subservience to the Kremlin was once again a fundamental characteristic of the political behavior of the elites in power during the process of “normalization” that followed the cessation of the reforms. The status quo was maintained as long as the political strategy of “care and coercion” was in place at home and subservience to the Soviet Union was observed in foreign affairs. The coming to power of Gorbachev and the launch of his reform program played a crucial role in undermining the authority of the ruling elites whose coming to power and political survival was due to the logic of the Brezhnev Doctrine.

Until 1985, the fear of Soviet intervention reassured the ruling elites and paralyzed opposition groups. After all, the suppression of the June 1953 working-class uprising in Berlin and the August 1968 intervention in Czechoslovakia were carried out primarily by the Soviet military. Once the new leader at the Kremlin signaled that the state of affairs was going to change, the opposition groups became more active in putting forward civic initiatives. Although a cross-class alliance on the Polish model did not occur in Czechoslovakia, dissident networks were very efficient in making themselves visible inside and outside the country towards the mid-1980s. However, what mobilized and eventually brought the social strata together in their non-violent protest against the regime, especially in the city of Prague, was the breakdown of the communist regimes in the neighboring countries, i.e., in Poland, Hungary and East Germany. The pivotal role played by the citizens of Prague has to be stressed once again, because it was the highly mobilized civil society in the capital city that put pressure on the power elite and created a revolutionary, though non-violent, situation. Moreover, as Garton Ash argues, the Czechs and Slovaks had the “advantage of backwardness” in the sense of borrowing from the experience of the neighboring countries in terms of conducting the protests and negotiating the transition to a new political order.⁴²

The two conjunctural factors addressed in this section, i.e., the “Gorbachev factor” and the “snowballing effect,” determined to a great extent the non-violent nature of the Czechoslovak revolution of 1989. The address delivered on New Year’s Day 1990 by Havel, who had just been elected president of Czechoslovakia, paid tribute to those who sacrificed themselves in order to make the emancipation of the former Soviet bloc countries possible. Regarding the political transformations in the Soviet Union and the ECE which contributed to the inception of the “velvet revolution” in Czechoslovakia, Havel commented:

“Without the changes in the Soviet Union, Poland, Hungary, and the German Democratic Republic, what has happened in our country could scarcely have happened. *In any event, it would not have followed such a peaceful course* [emphasis added].”⁴³ Nevertheless, in order to explain the mechanism that made possible the non-violent regime change in Czechoslovakia it is necessary to focus on the relationship between regime and society and on the way the visions of politics from above and below were accommodated in order to ensure a peaceful transition to a new political order. The following sections address these issues.

Nation-Specific Factors

The present work considers the political cultures at regime and community levels respectively as factors that determined the nature – violent or non-violent – of the revolutions, as well as the particular position each of the six countries under scrutiny occupied in the 1989 sequence of collapse of communist rule in ECE. In other words, depending on the way in which each regime accommodated the principle of “revolution from above” with the actual socio-economic conditions in the immediate aftermath of World War II and the political traditions of the country in question, a nationalization of the Stalinist model occurred sooner or later after the death of Stalin. Identity politics represents an issue of prime importance when addressing the relationship between regime and society in former Czechoslovakia. The Czechs and the Slovaks went through different processes of nation-building under communism. Thus, the “velvet revolution” of 1989 was followed quite soon by a “velvet divorce,” which became effective from 1 January 1993 and led to the establishment of two separate states, the Czech Republic and Slovakia. The next sections concentrate on regime and community political culture respectively

and on their interaction, in order to provide an explanation for the inception of the Czechoslovak “velvet revolution.” When necessary, particular aspects pertaining to Czech or Slovak politics under communist rule are also addressed, but only to the extent that they influenced the collapse of communist rule in Czechoslovakia.

Regime Political Culture

The Communist Party of Czechoslovakia (CPCz) was born in the aftermath of World War I through a unification of the communist organizations that existed on the territory of the newly created Czechoslovak state. As Jacques Rupnik aptly observes, the CPCz was built “from the periphery to the center,” in the sense that the structuring of a communist movement in this country started with the establishment of the communist organizations belonging to the Slovaks and to the national minorities such as the Germans and Ruthenes before reaching the Czech working-class movement.⁴⁴ The political traditions of the communist movement in the Czech lands deserve further examination. Headed by Bohumír Šmeral, originally a social-democrat whose vision of politics was influenced by Austro-Marxism, the Czechoslovak Communist Party resulted from a split within the Czechoslovak Social Democratic Party. As a consequence, a social-democratic subculture oriented towards the consolidation of the democratic Czechoslovak state continued to exist among the Czech communists. In contradistinction, the origins of Slovak communism can be traced back to the 1919 Hungarian Soviet Republic of Béla Kun, which exported the revolution to Slovakia, where it established a Slovak Soviet Republic that lasted for a very short period, i.e., from 16 June to 7 July 1919.⁴⁵ Thus, friction rooted in identity issues and ideological choices continued to exist

between Czech and Slovak communists within the unified movement. After a first political organization, labeled the Czechoslovak Communist Party, was established in May 1921, a centralized and unified party came into being under the name of the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia–CPCz (*Komunistická Strana Československa*–KSČ). It was Comintern pressure that determined the communist organizations throughout the country to merge during a meeting on 30 October–4 November 1921. The change of name marked the primacy of the principle of territoriality over that of nationality, which Comintern promoted everywhere.⁴⁶

A major shift in the political culture of Czechoslovak communism occurred during the period 1924–29. The “Czechoslovak path to socialism,” which Šmeral envisaged in accordance with social-democratic traditions, lost ground, while the CPCz underwent a process of “Bolshevization.” By 1928–29, the Stalinist faction within the CPCz had risen to prominence and at the Fifth Congress of the CPCz, held on 18–23 February 1929, the Stalinist Klement Gottwald was elected secretary general of the party.⁴⁷ This change of leader determined the early establishment of a Stalinist political culture within the CPCz, which proved to be particularly enduring because of the significant period of common socialization of the party’s leadership, i.e., February 1929–February 1948. According to Skilling: “The ‘Bolshevized’ party incorporated two of the salient features of Stalinist political culture: the total discipline of its members to its leadership (‘democratic centralism’), and the complete subservience of its leaders to Moscow and the Russian party.”⁴⁸

In the immediate aftermath of World War II, the CPCz registered a staggering growth in membership. At liberation in May 1945, the number of party members who had survived the war was at the most 40,000 of whom some 28,000 were living in the Czech lands. The CPCz membership rose to around 500,000

by July 1945 and reached 826,527 members by the end of the year. In March 1946, the CPCz numbered over 1,000,000 members and by the end of 1947 the total membership reached 1,281,138.⁴⁹ Possible explanations for such a spectacular increase of the CPCz membership are manifold. A significant shift occurred at the level of popular perceptions of politics and support for political parties after the traumatic events the country had gone through during the period 1938–45. Czechoslovakia had been humiliated by the Munich agreement and then occupied by Nazi Germany. The establishment of a separate pro-Nazi Slovak state, which reinforced the ethno-national bonds among the Slovak population, had added to the wartime traumatic experience of the Czechs. Furthermore, the experience of the Nazi occupation had added to the traditional positive perception of Russia, and subsequently of the Soviet Union, among the population. In 1945–46, the communists took advantage of the popular mood and, to quote Rupnik, the CPCz became “the most nationalistic, chauvinistic and Slavophile party in Czechoslovakia.”⁵⁰ Adapted to the postwar conditions, this strategy would serve the CPCz very well.

The parliamentary elections of 26 May 1946 have been generally referred to as the “first and last democratic elections” of the period 1945–89. The communists scored well in the elections: they received 40.2 percent of votes in the Czech lands and 30.37 percent of votes in Slovakia. Nationwide, the communists received 38 percent of votes.⁵¹ Following the May 1946 elections, Gottwald became prime minister in the new government – the third postwar government of Czechoslovakia, in power from 2 July 1946 to 25 February 1948.⁵² Major changes on the international scene prompted a shift on the domestic political scene. In this respect, the year 1947 was crucial. On 4 July 1947, the Czechoslovak government voted in favor of their country’s participation in the Marshall Plan. On Stalin’s direct intervention, the Czechoslovak

government reversed its decision on 10 July and subsequently refused the American aid.⁵³ The tightening of the Soviet grip on ECE was harbingered by the “two-camp policy,” which the Soviet chief ideologue Andrei Zhdanov announced on Stalin’s behalf in September 1947.

In February 1948, a government crisis eased the seizure of power by the CPCz. The crisis was sparked by a rather minor issue: the replacement of eight non-communist police officials with communists, as part of a wider plan to secure full control over the police forces. The non-communist ministers in the cabinet demanded that the communist minister of the interior, Václav Nosek, present a report on the situation during a meeting scheduled for 17 February. Fully supported by Prime Minister Gottwald, Nosek did not participate in the meeting. In response, twelve non-communist ministers resigned on 20 February. The governmental crisis evolved into a regime crisis. Taking advantage of their grip on the state apparatus and their influence on working-class organizations, the communists put unprecedented pressure on President Edvard Beneš. Eventually, on 25 February Beneš accepted the resignation of the twelve non-communist ministers and approved a new cabinet headed by Gottwald and composed of communists and communist sympathizers. The February 1948 coup in Czechoslovakia was in fact a bloodless seizure of power by the CPCz, which skillfully managed to exploit a governmental crisis and thus provoke a regime change.⁵⁴

The coup of February 1948 put an end to the illusions that the country could escape Sovietization. Once in power, the CPCz elite displayed the elements it had interiorized since 1929, i.e., party monolithism and subservience to Moscow. Thus, Gottwald did not hesitate to betray one of his longtime comrades, Rudolf Slánský, who was charged with treason and sentenced to death in 1952 within the general context of the Stalinist show trials in ECE.⁵⁵ Slánský’s arrest and subsequent execution put an abrupt

end to the discussion concerning “a specific Czechoslovak path to socialism.” Although Stalinist terror was applied to a significantly higher degree in Czechoslovakia than in the other countries in Central Europe, it did not equal the large-scale terror applied in Bulgaria or Romania. Thus, the “revolution from above” in Czechoslovakia was one of the most successful in Central Europe, in terms of both extent and outcome. Gottwald died shortly after his idol, Joseph Stalin, in the same month of March 1953 and was replaced by an apparatchik equally subservient to Moscow, Antonín Novotný.

Under Novotný’s leadership, Czechoslovak Stalinism managed to survive almost unaltered until the early 1960s. According to Rothschild: “The country remained sealed against any spillover from the contemporaneous Soviet ‘thaw’ and the New Course decompressions that were agitating, lacerating, and/or exhilarating the other people’s democracies.” With regard to Novotný’s dogmatic vision of communism, the same author further notes: “In January 1957 – after the Polish and Hungarian crises of the previous autumn – party chief Antonín Novotný could still denounce even the word *de-Stalinization* as being synonymous with ‘weakness and yielding to the forces of reaction [original emphasis].’”⁵⁶ At the same time, the relative success of the Second FYP 1956–60 alleviated public discontent with the dogmatic leadership in Prague. As shown above, the Czechoslovak economy faced growing difficulties only later, after the launch of the Third FYP 1961–65, which led to a crisis in 1962–63. The failure to fulfill the targets of the Third FYP prompted Novotný to agree to a plan of economic reforms which, though limited in scope and extent, allowed state enterprises to formulate their economic objectives. Apart from economic problems, the Stalinist power elite in Prague was confronted with Khrushchev’s second wave of de-Stalinization, launched on the occasion of the Twenty-Second Congress of the CPSU in October 1961. In this context, the

Czechoslovak leadership decided to loosen the ideological control exercised by the party in the cultural realm. As a consequence, Czechoslovakia experienced during the 1960s a period of cultural effervescence, generally considered the most innovative period in terms of cultural production under the communist rule. The Fourth Congress of the Czechoslovak Writers’ Union, held on 27–29 June 1967, proved to be a historic one due to the bold speeches delivered by a number of writers who argued in favor of cultural openness, independence of thought and liberty of creation.⁵⁷

Eventually, the reformist current reached the party ranks too. Critical stances towards the rule of Novotný were expressed at the Plenum of the CC of the CPCz, which took place on 30–31 October 1967. In the light of subsequent developments, it is worth mentioning the criticism addressed then to Novotný and his leadership style by the first secretary of the Slovak branch of the CPCz, Alexander Dubček. During a prolonged meeting of the CC, which opened in December 1967 and lasted until January 1968, the latter replaced the former as first secretary of the CPCz. At the same CC meeting it was decided to separate the positions of president of Czechoslovakia and first secretary of the CPCz and thus Novotný, who occupied the position of president as well as that of first secretary, remained president of the republic. The election of Dubček as head of the party inaugurated one of the most interesting projects aimed at reforming the system from above in a Sovietized country in ECE.⁵⁸

A blueprint of the reform program of the CPCz was made public on 10 April 1968, when the party newspaper *Rudé právo* published the Action Program of the CPCz. As mentioned earlier, this program put forward a set of political and economic reforms that were meant to renew the relationship between the regime and society at large. Among these reforms may be mentioned: observance of civil rights (including freedom of movement), a shift

of emphasis in the economy from heavy industry to consumer goods, equal status for Czechs and Slovaks, and a new approach to foreign affairs based on the principle of peaceful coexistence. At the same time, the Action Program set some clear political limits to the liberalization process. For instance, the document stated that the “socialist character of social relations” in Czechoslovakia was indisputable. Furthermore, the establishment of a political opposition was not permitted, and diverging points of view were to be accommodated “on the basis of the common socialist conception of National Front policy.”⁵⁹ However, the policies devised by the CC of the CPCz seemed to be too bold for the taste of the supreme leader in the Kremlin. Thus, Brezhnev decided to put an end to the Czechoslovak experiment in “socialism with human face,” in spite of the fact that during the Prague Spring the CPCz leadership remained faithful to Moscow. As already mentioned, Mlynář argued that the Prague Spring was a genuine attempt at reforming the “socialist commonwealth.” Recent analyses confirm such an assertion. For instance, with regard to the political vision of Dubček and his colleagues, Oldřich Tuřina notes: “As faithful communists, they could not imagine the notion of a rift with Moscow.”⁶⁰

The military invasion of Czechoslovakia on the night of 20 to 21 August 1968 was a rectifying action. It established in Prague a new leadership whose subservience to the Kremlin was as unquestionable as it had always been since 1929, except for the episode of limited emancipation – or of de-Stalinization without distancing from Moscow – epitomized by the Prague Spring.⁶¹ Nevertheless, the change of the CPCz leadership did not occur overnight: Husák replaced Dubček as first secretary of the CPCz on 17 April 1969, a date that can be considered as marking the official initiation of “normalization.” The repression which followed the Soviet-led invasion deepened the already existing cleavage between the Czech and Slovak communists. In Slovakia,

the purges were selective and limited in scope, while in the Czech lands the purges affected a large number of party bureaucrats. In fact, the suppression of the Prague Spring stressed the fundamental difference between the “political minds” of the Czech and Slovak communists. The political agenda of the Slovak power elite was rather national-communist and thus, seen from Bratislava, the federalization of Czechoslovakia represented a major achievement of the Prague Spring. Since “normalization” did not affect the federal arrangement, there was not much to blame on the Husák regime from the point of view of the Slovak power elite.⁶² As for the Czech communists, the defeat of the proponents of a “socialism with human face” and the victory of the hardliners led to the emergence of a socialist opposition which would join forces with the civic dissent in criticizing the Husák regime, thus making anti-communist opposition mainly a “Czech enterprise.” All in all, “normalization” affected a significant number of people, especially in the Czech lands, who lost their jobs or saw their careers cut short.

In this context, many accepted the tacit deal that the Husák regime offered to all those willing to accept its unwritten terms. A majority of those unwilling to accept such a compromise withdrew into a sort of internal exile, while a few of them engaged in daring dissident acts that evolved towards overt political opposition. As mentioned, the basis of this tacit deal was an improvement of the living standard and therefore the regime concentrated on housing, leisure and increased consumption. A Czech researcher describes the situation in the following terms: “Between the rulers and the ruled, an unspoken agreement was formed, in which the latter promised to behave and follow the orders as long as they did not have to work hard and still be relatively well-off.”⁶³ The regime provided affordable housing, and thus standard blocks of flats made of prefabricated panels multiplied throughout the country. People traveled more and many spent their vacations abroad,

especially in holiday destinations in “fraternal” countries such as Lake Balaton in Hungary or the summer resorts on the Black Sea Coast of Bulgaria. Furthermore, the domestic production of durables, especially cars and motorcycles, was improved and supplemented with products from Soviet bloc countries.

Born of the “limited sovereignty” doctrine of the Brezhnev era, the Husák regime had major difficulties adapting to the “new thinking” of Gorbachev, the new leader in the Kremlin. Not long after Gorbachev’s coming to power, the reformists within the CPCz became more active. According to Vít Šimral, four main factions emerged within the party in the immediate aftermath of the Seventeenth Congress of the CPCz (24–28 March 1986): (1) young reformists; (2) technocrats in the Federal Government; (3) pragmatic apparatchiks; and (4) orthodox hardliners.⁶⁴ The most prominent groups which engaged in a power struggle from 1986 onwards were the technocrats around Prime Minister Lubomír Štrougal (in office until October 1988), the pragmatic apparatchiks such as Ladislav Adamec (prime minister from October 1988 until December 1989), and the hardliners like Vasil Bilak (the chief CPCz ideologue until October 1988), Alois Indra or Antonín Kapek.⁶⁵ While the technocrats in the Federal Government were aware of the need to introduce economic reforms, the hardliners were keen to preserve the status quo which had enabled them to remain in power after the suppression of the Prague Spring. Beginning in January 1987, Husák, who had occupied the position of secretary general of the CPCz since 1969 and that of president of Czechoslovakia since 1975, was faced with increased pressure from within the party to resign from the leading position. A leadership change occurred eventually in November–December 1987, when the hardliners managed to impose their candidate, Miloš Jakeš, as secretary general of the party, while Husák retained his position as president of the country.

The fact that the anti-reform camp managed to impose its candidate at the top of the CPCz in late 1987 also explains why the 1989 revolution in Czechoslovakia was not negotiated, i.e., based on the roundtable principle. The pro-reform faction in the CPCz was not strong enough to impose its candidate, and thus the hardliners imposed a younger but nonetheless conservative party bureaucrat in the highest position. Worried by the reform program initiated by the new leader in the Kremlin, and still convinced of the stability of the communist system, the ruling elite in Prague opted for a “simulated change” and thus chose a “grey apparatchik” as party leader.⁶⁶ In such a context, the prospects of implementing economic and political reforms remained virtually non-existent in Czechoslovakia. As Bradley aptly puts it: “Gorbachev’s perestroika was going to be implemented in Czechoslovakia by Brezhnevite hardliners who were against it.”⁶⁷

During 1988, the Jakeš regime faced the thorny issue of economic reform, which made it vulnerable to structural factors, i.e., economic decline and ideological decay, as well as to conjunctural factors, especially the “Gorbachev factor.” On the one hand, the economy showed clear signs of stagnation and reforms were badly needed. The hardliners in power, however, feared that the adoption of reforms in the economic realm could undermine their political leadership. Thus, the CPCz leadership kept talking about reform rather than taking measures to make it happen. Moreover, in October 1988 the pro-reform Štrougal was ousted from his position as prime minister and replaced with Adamec, a pragmatic apparatchik who sided with the hardliners in the CPCz.⁶⁸ On the other hand, the reforms initiated by Gorbachev in the Soviet Union provided a timely support to the dispersed opposition groups in Czechoslovakia. After all, by demanding the introduction of reforms on the Soviet model the opposition was asking their leadership to offer to the Czechs and Slovaks what the Kremlin leader had promised to offer to the

peoples of the Soviet Union.⁶⁹ What is more, the coming to power of Gorbachev and the launch of his reform plan offered an unexpected opportunity to some of the purged reform communists of the Prague Spring period – beginning with Dubček himself – to make a comeback. To sum up, it became clear by the end of 1988 that against the backdrop of the worsening economic situation, protest actions by opposition groups were supported by an increasing number of citizens.

From January to November 1989, the Jakeš regime had to confront the growing mobilization of civic groups and public intellectuals. The political changes in neighboring Poland and Hungary gave impetus to public protests. The regime proved able to contain these protests through the more or less violent intervention by riot police, preemptive arrests and administrative measures. The collapse of the East German communist regime, however, represented a major destabilizing factor for the ruling elite in Prague. Due to a long period of political socialization in the virtually unchanged context of the Brezhnev Doctrine, the ruling elites in Czechoslovakia, just like those in East Germany, still believed in the stability of the communist system in the autumn of 1989. Consequently, these elites proved to be more inclined towards preserving the status quo instead of initiating a preemptive action, which could have ensured their survival into a new political order. At the same time, the communist elites in both countries eventually decided not to resort to violence in order to preserve the existing political order. The communist leadership in Prague, very much like that in East Berlin, was never put in the situation of applying large-scale violence against its own population. As Cold-War frontline states, both East Germany and Czechoslovakia received special attention from the Soviet Union. Thus, when critical situations arose and the local communists were close to losing control over the population – as in Berlin in June 1953 or in Prague in the summer of 1968 – it was the Red Army

that undertook the dirty business of “normalizing” the situation through the use of sheer force. At the same time, small-scale violence, especially at the borders with the West, was applied by the native communist elites in both countries up to the year 1989.

In the particular case of communist Czechoslovakia, until November 1989 the CPCz leadership continued to cling to power, while refusing to implement economic and political reforms and striving to contain the growing contestation from below. Although large-scale violence was not applied, dissidents were repeatedly arrested and demonstrations, processions or other public gatherings by the opposition were resolutely dispersed by riot police. As discussed below in the section on the political cultures of resistance, the breakdown of the communist regime in Czechoslovakia occurred in only ten days, due to an unprecedented mobilization of the population of the capital city Prague. The beginning was on 17 November, when the commemoration of Jan Opletal, a victim of Nazi terror, by a student-dominated crowd continued with a peaceful march towards the Wenceslas Square in downtown Prague.⁷⁰ The brutal intervention of the police provoked a “snowballing effect” in terms of popular mobilization against the regime, which culminated in a two-hour general strike held on 27 November 1989.

During this time span, the psychological blockage of the ruling elite became increasingly evident. In the evening of 24 November, the news of the resignation of the CPCz supreme leader Jakeš together with the ruling Politburo and the Secretariat came as a surprise. Karel Urbánek, who replaced Jakeš at the top of the CPCz, was another “grey apparatchik” who had nonetheless the advantage of not being directly associated with the hardliners in the party. It was after the successful two-hour general strike of 27 November that the CPCz officially renounced its monopoly on political power the next day, practically allowing for a multi-party system to be established in Czechoslovakia. Husák’s political career ended with his resignation from his position as president of Czechoslovakia on

10 December. This allowed the Federal Assembly (the Parliament) to elect on 29 December the first non-communist president in the person of Václav Havel, the dissident playwright who had become the most prominent leader of the democratic opposition.

The major features of the regime political culture in communist Czechoslovakia explain only partially the non-negotiated and non-violent nature of the 1989 regime change in that country. In order to have a complete picture of the aggregation of factors that determined this particular type of regime change in Czechoslovakia, it is necessary also to examine the political cultures of resistance, with a special emphasis on the post-1968 period. It is the purpose of the next section to address this issue.

Political Cultures of Resistance

In the case of the “welfare dictatorships” in East Germany and Czechoslovakia, as illustrated above, the improvement of the living conditions of the population stayed at the basis of a tacit deal between regime and society. The communist regimes in both countries reacted according to this logic as early as 1953. That year in Czechoslovakia, open protests spread throughout the country in reaction to the currency reform, which seriously affected the savings of many working-class families. In the aftermath of these protests, the communist regime in Prague concentrated on ensuring economic stability and providing to the working class. This strategy proved to be successful and this explains, to a certain extent, the relative quiescence of the working class during the 1968 military intervention by WTO troops to suppress the Prague Spring.

The Prague Spring had a twofold significance as far as the political cultures of resistance in communist Czechoslovakia are concerned. On the one hand, the atmosphere of political effervescence during the Prague Spring led to the awakening of civil society and the rising to prominence of public intellectuals as critics of the regime. On the

other hand, the suppression of the Prague Spring and the purges orchestrated by the Husák regime during the “normalization” period, when numerous reform communists of the Dubček era were persecuted, led to a major fracture at the level of the CPCz elite. In the light of the above, it might be argued that the domestic opposition to the Husák regime emerged mainly from the two milieus mentioned above, i.e., the “civic” one and the “socialist” one.⁷¹ In reaction to the persecutions of the “normalization” period, which affected primarily the Czech lands, dissent grew stronger in these parts of the country, while it remained feeble in the Slovak parts.⁷²

Dubček’s reformers represented the prime target of Husák’s “normalizers,” and thus the “socialist” opposition was gradually silenced during the 1970s. Some prominent figures of the Prague Spring were forced into exile, such as Zdeněk Mlynář (who moved to Austria) or Ota Šik (who moved to Switzerland). Many other reform communists were marginalized and pushed into internal exile. Considering the major difference between the Czech and Slovak lands in terms of “normalization” processes, some scholars have even argued that after 21 August 1968 the purges were carried out according to a double standard. While in the Czech lands the purges took the form of a “cold civil war,” in Slovakia they were carried out more cautiously and had less serious consequences.⁷³ In 1969 alone, some 40,000 individuals identified as close to the Dubček regime were vetted and as many as half of them lost their positions. By January 1970, some 136,000 functionaries had been forced to quit their positions or simply dismissed; of these, around 80 percent were Czechs.⁷⁴ Moreover, some 10,000 individuals belonging to the officer corps of the Czechoslovak armed forces were purged for alleged right-wing convictions during the “normalization” period.⁷⁵ These repressive measures determined that some of the purged pro-reform communists would join forces with the critical intellectuals from civic organizations in opposing the regime.

When talking of the “civic” opposition to the communist regime in Czechoslovakia in the post-1968 period, the first names that come to mind are those of Havel and Charter 77. Nevertheless, it took some time until these names came to epitomize the anti-communist opposition in Czechoslovakia. In the early 1970s, one could talk of a “dispersed opposition in a demobilized society,” to use Tůma’s inspired words, rather than of a structured opposition with clearly defined goals. In the aftermath of the Prague Spring, a radical left-wing group of students in Prague established the Revolutionary Youth Movement–RYM (*Hnutí Revoluční Mládeže*), on the model of similar organizations in the West. In December 1969, the secret police arrested the members of the group who were subsequently put on trial in the spring of 1971.⁷⁶ Other similar initiatives were suppressed by the authorities with the help of the ubiquitous secret police. Although initiatives by small opposition groups – such as petitions, distribution of flyers or circulation of samizdat publications – did exist over the period 1971–76, none of them really annoyed the regime. At the same time, non-conformist people withdrew into the underground culture or into private niches, which were outside the reach of the party. The younger generations, as elsewhere in the Soviet bloc, found refuge from conformism and ideological orthodoxy in rock music and Western popular culture.

Of the rock bands that were established in the aftermath of the WTO invasion of 21 August 1968, the one named The Plastic People of the Universe (PPU) rose to prominence not only because of the kind of music it played, but also because of the repressive measures taken by the regime against it. The band started to perform publicly in 1971, only to be banned from public performance in 1973. PPU, however, had its followers, who attended private concerts, while their recordings were made in basements and distributed unofficially through underground networks.⁷⁷ In 1976, several members of the band were arrested

and put on trial on charges of alcoholism, drug use and indecent behavior. Among those put on trial was Ivan Jirous, a major figure of the underground music scene in Prague, who was at the same time the artistic director and manager of the PPU band. Apparently apolitical, this trial represented nonetheless a watershed in the structuring of anti-communist dissent.

Milan “Mejla” Hlavsa – founding member, chief songwriter and original bassist of the band – recalls the moment without overstating the political influence of PPU. Instead, he speaks of the trial of several PPU band members as an event that brought together likeminded individuals determined to protest openly against the violation of a basic human right, freedom of expression, by the Husák regime:

Historians see the Plastics’ arrest and sentence in direct relation to the origins of Charter 77. Of course I also see the relations, but only in that the trial brought together people concerned about the fate of our country. Václav Havel was the engine of the efforts. The band itself had no political ambition and we did not intend to destroy communism by our music, but if we helped we are only glad.⁷⁸

Havel, who was a friend of Jirous, mobilized critical intellectuals in Czechoslovakia and in the West, such as the Nobel laureate German writer Heinrich Böll, in support of the underground musicians. However, Jirous and several other musicians were convicted and sent to jail.⁷⁹ Nevertheless, the trial of the PPU offered an unexpected opportunity for a number of critical intellectuals to join their efforts in support of a group of underground musicians unjustly persecuted by the communist regime. In other words, the persecution of the PPU band contributed to the emergence of the most prominent movement for human rights in communist Czechoslovakia, i.e., Charter 77.

The founding document of Charter 77 was a declaration issued on 1 January 1977. The declaration represented in fact an indictment against the Husák regime, based on evidence concerning the non-observance of basic human rights. The document opened with the following statement: “On 13 October 1976, there were published in the Codex of Laws of the ČSSR, no. 120, an ‘International Pact on Civil and Political Rights’ and an ‘International Pact on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights,’ which had been signed on behalf of Czechoslovakia in 1968, confirmed at Helsinki in 1975 and which came into force in our country on 23 March 1976. Since that time our citizens have had the right and our state the duty to be guided by them.”⁸⁰ Throughout the text, the signatories put forward numerous examples of violation of human rights by the communist regime in Czechoslovakia, thus illustrating that the regime’s domestic political actions were in direct contradiction with the international pacts it had signed. For instance, the signatories referred to the following situation: “The implementation of the right ‘to seek, receive and spread information and ideas of all kinds, regardless of frontiers, either orally, in writing or in print, or by means of art’ (pt. 2, art. 13 of the first pact) is subject to persecution, not only outside the courts but judicially too, often under the guise of criminal charges (as is borne out, among others, by the trials of young musicians now going on).”⁸¹ In the final section of the declaration, the signatories defined the rationale for their initiative, the goals and the forms of action in the following terms:

Charter 77 is a free, informal and open association of people of different convictions, different faiths and different professions, who are linked by the desire, individually or jointly, to insist on the respecting of civil and human rights in our country and throughout the world.... Charter 77 arose from the background of the solidarity and friendship of people who share concern for the fate of the ideals to which they have linked

their life and work. Charter 77 is not an organization, it has no statutes, no permanent organs and no organized membership. Everyone who agrees with the idea behind it, participates in its work and supports it is its member. Charter 77 is not a base for opposition political activity.... It does not want to lay down its own programs of political or social reforms or changes but to engage in the spheres of its activity in a constructive dialogue with political and state power, especially by calling attention to various concrete instances of the violation of human and civil rights.⁸²

In accordance with its founding document, Charter 77 was represented by three spokespersons, elected annually. The first three spokespersons were philosopher Jan Patočka, playwright Václav Havel and diplomat Jiří Hájek.⁸³ Initially, the Charter 77 declaration bore some 240 signatures, but the number of signatories rose gradually to around 2,000. Considering that a majority of the Chartists were intellectuals, among whom writers featured prominently, the main avenue for action was the publication of documents: declarations, petitions, open letters, etc. Skilling calculated that during its first decade of existence, Charter 77 issued around 340 documents.⁸⁴ More importantly, Charter 77 was devised in such a way as to permit the emergence of a pungent critique of the communist system from the perspective of human rights protection. The issue of human rights protection could not only unite both the Czechs and Slovaks in their critique of the regime irrespective of their ideological conviction or religious faith, but also offer a common, transnational platform to dissident groups in Sovietized ECE. It is worth noting that the emergence of Charter 77 prompted similar initiatives by other civic groups, of which the most important was the establishment, in April 1978, of the Committee for the Defense of the Unjustly Persecuted (*Výbor na Obranu Nespravedlivě Stíhaných*—VONS). In contradistinction with the broad scope of action of Charter 77, VONS concentrated on specific cases

of persecution of citizens by the communist authorities. In this respect, VONS was similar to the Polish KOR.

The Husák regime was very harsh on the Chartists from the very beginning. The most prominent founding members, the spokespersons in particular, were permanently harassed, interrogated and sentenced to various terms in prison. In the case of Patočka, the harassment and long hours of interrogation by the secret police in March 1977 hurried his death. After Charter 77 made public its declaration on 1 January 1977, the authorities unleashed a sustained denigration campaign against the signatories which culminated late that month with the issuance of a petition – known as the “Anti-Charter” – signed by numerous pro-regime personalities. Through such actions as constant harassment by the secret police or public denigration campaigns, the communist authorities managed to obtain the perverse effect of attracting domestic as well as international public attention to the plight of the Chartists. Moreover, Havel, who was already known for his literary talent as playwright and essayist, rose to prominence as the most representative Czech dissident.⁸⁵

As shown above in the section on regime political culture, the coming to power of Gorbachev in the Soviet Union and the launch of his reform program gave impetus to the criticism of the Husák regime. Dissidents pointed towards Moscow and praised the Gorbachev reforms, thus putting additional pressure on the communist regime in Czechoslovakia. As mentioned before, the party leadership resorted only to a “simulated change” and elected in November–December 1987 another conservative apparatchik in the person of Jakeš as secretary general of CPCz, while Husák retained his position as president of Czechoslovakia. The change at the top of the party, although “simulated,” favored the emergence of more radical protests from below. Relative dissatisfaction with the regime’s economic performance contributed to the mobilization of the urban population, who started to attend the street demonstrations in growing numbers. Such changes only added to

the general feeling of dissatisfaction with the communist regime, since the period of high consumption and rising expectations, 1971–80, had been long replaced by a period of relative stagnation in terms of living standard, 1981–89.

In the radicalization of dissident stances, a conjunctural factor also played an important role, i.e., generational change. In 1988–89, one could witness the coming of age of the generation born during the “normalization” period, a generation that had no illusions whatsoever regarding the communist system and was therefore more prone to engage in resolute protests.⁸⁶ Street demonstrations multiplied beginning in 1988, and culminated with a large demonstration in Prague on the occasion of the twentieth commemoration of the WTO invasion of Czechoslovakia on 21 August 1988. The same year 1988, in spring, a demonstration for freedom of religion – known as the “candlelight demonstration” – had been organized in the Slovak capital Bratislava. The communist regime abstained from applying large-scale violence, but took appropriate measures to disperse the demonstrations, processions and other public gatherings organized by the opposition. In 1989, while the communist regimes in neighboring Poland and Hungary were taking steps towards “negotiated transitions” to a new political order, more and more demonstrations were organized by the Czech opposition, especially in Prague. From January to November 1989, the already traditional forms of public protest, i.e., petitions and demonstrations, multiplied. However, the lack of unity on the part of the opposition groups became evident on the occasion of the twenty-first commemoration of the WTO invasion of Czechoslovakia on 21 August 1989. Many expected that the commemoration would be the long-awaited occasion for a massive anti-regime demonstration able to determine a regime change. A demonstration did indeed take place on 21 August 1989, but it turned out to be much smaller than expected. Nevertheless, the

“snowballing effect” contributed heavily to accelerating public mobilization against the regime. As already noted, the fall of the Berlin Wall on the night of 9 to 10 November 1989 influenced the unfolding of events in neighboring Czechoslovakia.

Beginning on 17 November 1989, the Jakeš regime was faced with unprecedented popular mobilization in the capital city Prague. According to Garton Ash, student anti-regime activism stayed at the core of the ten-day demonstration that ultimately brought down the communist regime. As mentioned, on Friday 17 November, a student public gathering aimed at commemorating the death of a student killed by the Nazis in November 1939, was followed by a peaceful march towards downtown Prague. The riot police intervened in force to disperse the non-violent crowd. The use of disproportionate police force to disperse peaceful demonstrators sparked a wave of criticism against the regime. Civic initiatives, petitions, public protests, strikes and demonstrations multiplied. On Sunday 19 November, the opposition established the Civic Forum (*Občanské Fórum*) in order to coordinate the anti-regime protests, while Havel emerged as the undisputed leader of the opposition. The Slovak counterpart of the Czech Civic Forum was formed on Monday, 20 November 1989. Established in Bratislava, Public Against Violence (*Verejnost' proti násiliu*–VPN) collaborated closely with the Civic Forum throughout the entire regime change period.⁸⁷ Against a backdrop of growing popular unrest, the CPCz leadership resigned on Friday 24 November, but Jakeš was replaced by Urbánek, an apparatchik with no particular qualities that would have recommended him for such a position.

This change put an end to the non-negotiated stage of the “velvet revolution,” as the representatives of the regime finally agreed to hold talks with delegates of the oppositional Civic Forum. From Sunday, 26 November, until Saturday, 9 December, the regime and the opposition participated in ten rounds of negotiations until a Government of National Understanding –

which comprised ten communists, two socialists, two members of the People's Party and seven ministers not affiliated to a political party – was eventually formed.⁸⁸ During the ten rounds of negotiations, popular pressure was arguably the main factor which determined the regime to make a series of concessions that finally led to regime change in Czechoslovakia. It was the two-hour general strike on Monday, 27 November, that made the CPCz leadership officially renounce its monopoly on political power on Tuesday, 28 November. This step opened the way for political competition in Czechoslovakia, while political changes continued at a rapid pace. Unable to reach an agreement with the opposition in order to form a coalition government, federal Prime Minister Adamec resigned on 7 December and was replaced by Marián Čalfa, a young (he was 43 years old at the time) and reform-oriented communist.⁸⁹ Čalfa succeeded in forming the Government of National Understanding on 10 December. Shortly after the coalition government was sworn in, Husák presented his resignation. After Husák's resignation, the opposition nominated Havel for the presidency. At the same time, a major obstacle was that the Parliament was still controlled by the communists. Prime Minister Čalfa, however, supported Havel's nomination and thus the final act in the transition to a democratic political order took place on 29 December 1989, when the Parliament elected Havel as president of Czechoslovakia.

Reflections on the “Velvet Revolution” in Czechoslovakia

After the suppression of the Prague Spring, the Husák regime aimed at, and to a certain extent succeeded in, establishing a type of “welfare dictatorship” in Czechoslovakia. As a consequence, the regime managed to acquire legitimacy and ensure social quiescence.

It may be argued that in the Czechoslovak case relative, and not absolute, dissatisfaction with the economic performance of the regime contributed appreciably to the demise of communist rule. As shown above, if one applies the theory of short-term setbacks to the Czechoslovak case, the situation in the late 1980s can be explained as follows. The period 1971–80, which might be termed as a period of rising living standard and implicitly expectations, was followed by the period 1981–89, which was characterized by relative stagnation that led to an increasing societal dissatisfaction with the regime. Relative dissatisfaction was also rooted in the comparison between Czechoslovakia and neighboring Western countries, such as Austria or West Germany, whose populations enjoyed a higher standard of living.

Furthermore, the two conjunctural factors which influenced the unfolding of events throughout ECE during the revolutionary year 1989, i.e., the “Gorbachev factor” and the “snowballing effect,” determined to a great extent the non-violent nature of the Czechoslovak revolution. As President Havel affirmed in his address delivered on New Year’s Day 1990, the political transformations in the Soviet Union and the ECE determined the “peaceful course” of the 1989 Czechoslovak regime change. In 1989, the Jakeš regime was faced with growing mobilization by civic groups and public intellectuals, under the influence of the political changes in neighboring Poland and Hungary. In addition, the collapse of the East German communist regime represented a major destabilizing factor for the ruling elite in Prague.

The way the party leadership in both East Germany and Czechoslovakia reacted to the wave of contestation from below deserves further discussion. The communist elites in both countries proved more inclined towards preserving the status quo instead of initiating a preemptive action, which could have ensured their survival into a new political order. Ultimately, these elites decided

not to resort to deadly violence in order to preserve the existing political order, and the explanation may be found in the processes of political socialization of the power elites in the two countries. The communist leadership in Prague, very much like that in East Berlin, had never been put in the situation of applying large-scale violence against its own population. As Cold-War frontline states, both East Germany and Czechoslovakia had received special attention from the Soviet Union. When critical situations did occur and the local communists were close to losing control over their respective populations, the Red Army undertook the dirty business of “normalizing” the situation through the use of sheer force, as was the case in East Berlin in June 1953 or in Prague in August 1968.

The breakdown of the communist regime in Czechoslovakia occurred at a rapid pace, in only ten days, and was primarily due to a massive, unprecedented mobilization by the population beginning with 17 November 1989. The non-negotiated stage of the “velvet revolution” ended on 26 November, when newly-elected representatives of the regime agreed to hold talks with delegates of the oppositional Civic Forum. During the roundtable negotiations, popular pressure ultimately determined the regime to make a series of concessions that finally led to regime change. The crucial step towards the end of the communist rule in Czechoslovakia, i.e., the decision to put an end to the communist party’s monopoly of power, was taken after the two-hour general strike of 27 November, and after ten days of increased mobilization against the regime. Symbolically, Havel’s election as president of Czechoslovakia on 29 December 1989 marked the end of an era and the point when the process of democratic transformation took an irreversible course.

CHAPTER SIX

Bulgaria

The collapse of the communist regime in Bulgaria has a twofold significance. On the one hand, the 1989 revolution in Bulgaria closed the second stage of the 1989 revolutions in ECE, that of the non-negotiated but non-violent revolutions. On the other hand, the breakdown of communist rule in Bulgaria meant the end of a modernizing-nationalizing dictatorship, similar to the one in neighboring Romania. The communist regimes in these two countries perceived the party-states they were building as incompletely modernized and the national communities as insufficiently homogenous. Thus, modernization and nationalism represented powerful instruments for securing popular support in the hands of these regimes. Accordingly, modernization, understood primarily as the development of heavy industry branches, and the building of ethnically homogenous nation-states gradually became major political goals for the power elites in both countries. Yet, with regard to the nature of the regime change, Bulgaria differed fundamentally from neighboring Romania, where

Notes for this chapter begin on page 389.

the only one of the 1989 revolutions to be non-negotiated and violent took place. Instead, a palace coup organized on 10 November 1989, the date celebrated by Bulgarians as the fall of communism, only initiated the revolutionary changes, which unfolded in that country during the period November–December 1989. Roundtable talks did take place in Bulgaria during the period January–March 1990, but the argument put forward in this chapter is that the roundtable talks did not precede the regime change, but followed it. Unlike in Poland or Hungary, these negotiations occurred while the leading role of the communist party had already been abolished under the pressure of the newly structured opposition. The following chapter uses the explanatory model employed for the four countries that preceded Bulgaria in the 1989 sequence of collapse, i.e., Poland, Hungary, East Germany and Czechoslovakia, to identify the particular aggregation of structural, conjunctural and nation-specific factors that characterized Bulgaria's exit from communism.

Structural Factors

Economic Failure

This author contends that the communist dictatorships in Bulgaria and Romania can be termed as modernizing-nationalizing. A distinctive characteristic of these dictatorships was their relative economic backwardness in comparison with their Central European counterparts. Another feature was their more or less skillful instrumentalization of ethnic nationalism in order to secure popular support. Given the relative backwardness of Bulgaria and Romania, the achievements of the communist regimes in these countries in terms of industrialization, urbanization, education and public health, although modest in comparison with developed

Western societies, were nevertheless notable. This section addresses the economic performance of the communist regime in Bulgaria, and illustrates the relationship between the economic slowdown of the late 1980s and the growing dissatisfaction with the regime. Focusing on the industrialization process and the general improvement of life conditions beginning in the early 1960s, this part also underlines that the population perceived the communist regime as having something to offer to Bulgarian society in general. Such an analysis enables one to understand better the mechanism of rising expectations and setbacks that led to the emergence of a significant wave of societal dissatisfaction with the regime in Bulgaria in 1988–89.

The leadership of the Bulgarian Communist Party–BCP (*Bulgarska Komunisticheska Partiya*–BKP) was aware of the state of relative backwardness of their country in comparison to the rest of the Soviet bloc countries. After the 1989 regime change in Bulgaria, looking retrospectively at his long period in power, Todor Zhivkov affirmed that in 1956, when he rose to prominence, his country was “the most backward of the members of the Warsaw Pact and the CMEA.”¹ Obviously, Zhivkov's assertion was self-serving and meant to stress that the achievements of the period 1956–89 were due in many respects to his leadership. However, one cannot deny the fact that, in spite of many misdirected investments, the Bulgarian economy developed significantly under communist rule. The “socialist” transformation of the Bulgarian economy was initiated through the adoption of the Soviet model of central planning. In the economic realm, the “revolution from above” was launched through a Two-Year Reconstruction Plan 1947–48. Subsequently, the Bulgarian economy was conducted according to nine Five-Year Plans (FYP), which covered the period 1949–88, as follows: 1949–52; 1953–57; 1958–60; 1961–65; 1966–70; 1971–75; 1976–80; 1981–85; and 1986–88.² Three of these nine five-year plans were decreed to be fulfilled well in

advance: the First FYP 1949–52 (originally devised to cover the period 1949–53), the Third FYP 1958–60 (originally devised for the period 1958–62), and the Ninth FYP 1986–88 (originally devised for the period 1986–90).³ The other six FYPs were full-term.

The First FYP 1949–52 envisaged a threefold expansion of heavy industry, as well as an augmentation of the share of industrial production within the national product from 30 to 47 percent, an objective that was not actually reached.⁴ As far as the collectivization process was concerned, 62 percent of the land was expected to be covered by collective farms by 1953.⁵ The death of Stalin and the initiation of the New Course imposed a change of policy in Sofia too. Thus, the Stalinist power elite headed by Vulko Chervenkov decided to allot a larger share to consumption in order to avoid outbursts of social discontent. Consequently, the Second FYP 1953–57 envisaged a mere 60 percent expansion of the industrial production, while a larger share of investments was to be directed towards light industry and agriculture.⁶ At the same time, the collectivization of agriculture was continued and by the year 1958 some 90 percent of arable land was covered by collective farms.⁷

The adoption of the New Course also meant the coming to prominence of Zhivkov, who became the uncontested leader of a monolithic party. After replacing Chervenkov as first secretary of the CC of the BCP in 1954,⁸ Zhivkov consolidated his position as supreme leader of the BCP in 1956, in the context of Khrushchev's de-Stalinization campaign, when his predecessor lost the position of prime minister which he had hitherto retained. Finally, in 1962, Zhivkov took over the leading governmental position too.⁹ Devised in the context of the political changes outlined above, the Third FYP 1958–60 focused on the achievement of extensive industrial growth. Due to its objectives, the Third FYP in Bulgaria has been often compared with the

Chinese "Great Leap Forward," but other authors, such as John R. Lampe, argue that the source of inspiration was undoubtedly Soviet, as the Third FYP "drew primarily on Soviet practice and priorities."¹⁰ Nonetheless, it is generally agreed that a decisive shift in terms of industrial development occurred during the Third FYP, and the trend was continued during the Fourth FYP 1961–65.

At the end of the Fourth FYP, a major change could be observed in the structure of production in communist Bulgaria. Thus, the share of industrial production in the national income rose from 37 percent in 1950 to 45 percent in 1966.¹¹ Conversely, the share of agricultural production in the total material production decreased from 43 percent in 1950 to 33 percent in 1965. Furthermore, employment in agriculture shrank from 80 percent of total employment in 1950 to 45 percent in 1965. At the same time, the rural population decreased from 72 percent in 1950 to 55 percent in 1965, while the urban population increased during the same time span from 28 percent to around 45 percent of the total population.¹² A new and relatively modern steel complex was inaugurated in 1964 at Kremikovtsi. Together with the steel plant in Pernik, which was originally built in 1934 and expanded significantly after the communist takeover, the Kremikovtsi steel combine was a proof of the determination of the BCP leadership to continue the sustained development of heavy industry.¹³ Actually, the strategy of modernizing Bulgarian society, which the communist power elite headed by Zhivkov initiated, started to bear fruit from the early 1960s onwards. As a consequence, the standard of living of the population began to rise and the trend was maintained well into the 1970s.

Yet, very much as in neighboring Romania, the developmental drive centered on extensive growth reached its limits in the 1970s. In spite of numerous attempts at reforming the economic system in Bulgaria, what was actually achieved was only a "simulated change." As a scholar of Bulgarian affairs puts it: "Whilst showing

some awareness of the flaws of the planned economy, Zhivkov, unlike Kádár in Hungary, never questioned its basic principles. He engaged in one grandly-named reform project after another, but disregarded them before they could be put into practice.”¹⁴ The same author summarized the approach to economic reform of the power elite in Bulgaria in the Zhivkov era as follows: “Talking about reform served as a substitute for real reform.”¹⁵ Bulgaria bought Western licenses in order to develop its industry, including more advanced sectors such as electronics and computer devices. Investments were also made in the tourism industry. At the same time, Bulgaria benefited from different forms of Soviet economic support. For instance, the Soviet oil that was supplied to Bulgaria at very favorable prices was resold on the international markets to bring hard-currency revenues into the state budget. This economic strategy improved Bulgaria’s external-debt servicing capacity until the early-1980s.¹⁶ With regard to Soviet–Bulgarian economic relations, Marvin Jackson once noted: “Probably no other country enjoyed so much stimulus from the combined effects of generous Soviet supplies of energy and raw materials, combined with an equally generous Soviet willingness to accept Bulgarian manufactured goods in return.”¹⁷

After the birth of Solidarity in Poland, the Bulgarian regime decided to increase the import of consumer goods in order to create a positive image among the population and avert similar outbursts of social discontent. The imbalances introduced with this decision added to the structural flaws of Bulgarian economy. Furthermore, beginning in 1984 the Soviets decided to put an end to their policy of providing Bulgaria with economic supplies at privileged prices. In his memoirs, Kostadin Tchakarov, a former nomenklatura member who served as deputy head of the Department for Economic, Technical and Scientific Policy of the CC of the BCP speaks about an official visit he paid in 1986 to the Soviet Union, where he was received by Nikolai Slyunkov, secretary of the CC of

the CPSU and member of the Politburo. According to the former, the latter made clear that the Soviets decided to adopt a new economic policy towards Bulgaria and thus “eliminate a relationship which his country had started to view as an unjust, colonial structure of trading.”¹⁸ In fact, the Soviets announced the elimination of the economic advantages granted to their most faithful allies within the Soviet bloc. As Tchakarov notes, this change of policy in Moscow actually meant that “the decades-old political, administrative and economic guarantees had become a thing of the past.”¹⁹ According to the same former nomenklatura member, in the 1980s around three quarters of the annual imports of raw materials, which amounted to some USD 4 billion, were destined by the Bulgarian authorities to industrial branches that could hardly sell their products on the international markets.²⁰ As a consequence, the external debt of the country rose over the period 1985–89 from USD 2.4 billion to USD 9.2 billion.²¹

When assessing the influence of the economic factors on the fall of Zhivkov on 10 November 1989, it is worth stressing the major difference between the cases of Bulgaria and Romania. As far as Romania is concerned, the country faced throughout the 1980s a severe economic crisis which contributed significantly to the general dissatisfaction with the Ceaușescu regime. In Bulgaria, the economic problems did accumulate towards the late 1980s, but the situation was by no means comparable to that in its neighboring country, where large segments of the population were forced to think in terms of biological survival. As previously mentioned, the Zhivkov regime made efforts to avert popular discontent by importing Western consumer goods, which further complicated the structural problems the country was already facing. It was the lack of resources to pursue the policy of importing Western goods in order to appease the population that led to a growing feeling of relative deprivation among large segments of

the Bulgarian population. However, such a situation was far from sparking a popular uprising able to bring down the regime.

At the same time, the alarming accumulation of structural problems in the economy and in society did not escape the feeble reformist faction within the BCP. Moreover, the change of foreign policy in Moscow and the scaling down of Soviet economic aid for the most faithful allies in ECE such as Bulgaria contributed not only to the deepening of the structural crisis of the Zhivkov regime, but also to the structuring of an intra-party opposition to the ageing supreme leader of the Bulgarian communists. It may be argued that in the Bulgarian case the accumulation of economic problems contributed to the decision of a reformist group within the BCP to initiate, in the favorable context of the fall of the Berlin Wall on 9 November, the “preemptive action” of 10 November 1989 that demoted Zhivkov and opened the way for a genuine regime change in that country.

Ideological Decay

No other satellite country matched Bulgaria in subservience to the Kremlin. Throughout the communist period, analysts considered this country the “most faithful and compliant ally” of the Soviet Union. Skilling, a keen analyst of the communist phenomenon in ECE, once noted: “The history of Bulgarian socialism might be expected also to bring communist Bulgaria closer to Soviet Russia than Romania.”²² The revolutionary credentials of the power elites in the six countries under scrutiny were, as already noted, rather weak as long as they did not come to power via a “first,” classic revolution such as the Bolshevik one. Consequently, these power elites engaged solely in a “second revolution,” carried out from above. Yet, it is difficult to assess the commitment to revolutionary ideals in a country like Bulgaria (or Romania), which had an overwhelmingly peasant population, living on the threshold

of poverty. On the one hand, the presence of Georgi Dimitrov, a personality of the Comintern and the world communist movement, at the top of the BCP indicated that Marxism-Leninism had a certain tradition in this party.²³ On the other hand, at societal level, the acceptance of the regime depended on the at least partial fulfillment of the promise of improving the living standard of the population, and not necessarily on a widespread adherence to the tenets of Marxism-Leninism.

When the communist takeovers took place, Bulgaria and Romania were predominantly agricultural countries whose economies lagged behind those of the countries in Central Europe. The Bulgarian communists decided to build their party-state by following the political line of the Kremlin, while the Romanian communists decided to build theirs by departing cautiously from Moscow’s line in the aftermath of Khrushchev’s “secret speech” of 1956. Once the period of Stalinist terror came to end, from the early 1960s up to the mid-1970s in Romania, and to the mid-1980s in Bulgaria, significant segments of the populations in both countries perceived that their living conditions and quality of life were improving. In other words, what the modernizing-nationalizing regimes in Bulgaria and Romania managed to achieve was a sort of “limited legitimacy through consent” based on some economic achievements and by no means a genuine commitment by the bulk of the population to the tenets of Marxism-Leninism.

In the Bulgarian case, ideological decay could be defined as the “dying of the faith” in the modernizing, and later on, nationalizing project developed under the long rule of Zhivkov. This phenomenon gained momentum under the influence of an external factor, namely the “Gorbachev factor.” The coming to power of Gorbachev and the subsequent launch of his program of reforms represented also a turning point in the realm of ideology in the sense that after 1985 the process of ideological decay accelerated significantly. Soviet literature was available in Bulgaria,

while Bulgarians could understand Russian. Thus, the popularity of terms such as *perestroika* and *glasnost* increased tremendously especially among the educated urban strata. The economic slowdown, which became evident in the second half of the 1980s, added to popular dissatisfaction with the rule of Zhivkov. True, the regime aimed at making use of nationalism as an ideological substitute for the failure of the modernization project that had appealed to large segments of the population from the early 1960s onwards. However, in contradistinction with Romania, where ethnic nationalism provided support for the regime from 1968 onwards, before damaging its international relations in the late 1980s, the so-called “revival process” initiated in Bulgaria in the mid-1980s led primarily to international isolation, not to speak of the diplomatic conflict with neighboring Turkey. Moreover, the sudden and violent campaign of forced assimilation of the Turkish minority ultimately had a perverse effect, in the sense that the unrest it stirred contributed to a general dissatisfaction with the rule of Zhivkov, which became obvious in 1988–89.

The collapse of communist rule in Bulgaria was also due to the creation of civic organizations and opposition groups oriented towards human rights protection and environmental issues, as will be shown below. However, it was the tradition of following Moscow’s line that played in this respect the most important role, for it favored the appearance of a reformist faction within the BCP that envisaged the replacement of Zhivkov’s power elite with a Gorbachevite one. The “dying of the faith” in Zhivkovism and the growing popular support for Gorbachevism was perhaps the most interesting ideological shift that Bulgaria witnessed in the second half of the 1980s. Eventually, the Zhivkov regime became aware of the undermining power of the Soviet literature of the *perestroika* period and consequently decided to put a ban on it. As Roumiana Deltcheva observes: “Perhaps the greatest paradox of the last years of Bulgarian totalitarianism involved the practical

disappearance of the liberal tribune of Soviet *glasnost*, the magazine *Ogonek*, from all news-stands in the country.”²⁴ This was an all the more interesting phenomenon considering the Zhivkov regime’s tradition of subservience to the Soviet Union. As Deltcheva further points out: “These publications were considered even more dangerous than straightforward Western propaganda because this was subversion coming from within, from the very centre of the system rather than from the class enemy.”²⁵ Alongside other factors, this decay of Zhivkovism contributed significantly to the initiation of the political changes in Bulgaria, which started on 10 November 1989 with Zhivkov’s removal from power.

Conjunctural Factors

As already shown, conjunctural factors – external, as well as internal – interacted with the structural and nation-specific ones and eventually determined the collapse of communist rule in ECE. In Bulgaria, contingency played a major role in the breakdown of the modernizing-nationalizing communist dictatorship. As far as the external factors are concerned, the “Gorbachev factor” and the “snowballing effect” had the greatest influence upon events unfolding in this country in 1989. The changes in the Soviet Union determined by Gorbachev influenced Bulgaria in a manifold way. As noted above, the Bulgarian communist elite proved to be more inclined to follow Moscow’s political line rather than emancipate itself from the Kremlin on the model of neighboring “fraternal” countries such as Romania, Albania or Yugoslavia. Thus, as Maria Todorova notes, in the case of Bulgaria “the influence of *perestroika* has been of immediate consequence, much more than the example with reform experimentation in Poland or Hungary.”²⁶ The new political discourse in Moscow, centered on terms such as “renewal” and “rethinking,” worried

the ruling elites and emboldened the emerging civil societies in the Soviet bloc countries.²⁷

While Bulgarian communists were reluctant to emulate the Soviet reforms from fear of undermining their own grip on power, at societal level the opposition groups felt encouraged by the reforms initiated in the Soviet Union. Individuals, as well as civic groups, became more daring in articulating critical discourses towards the regime. Furthermore, knowledge of the Russian language eased the access of Bulgarian intellectuals to the Soviet literature on the reforms of the Gorbachev era. With regard to this issue, Dimitrina Petrova observes: “Bulgarian dissent was strongly encouraged and grew into widespread mobilization under the impact of Gorbachev’s reforms. As Russian-reading people, and in a country well-supplied with Russian-language literature, Bulgarians had access to numerous periodicals of the perestroika period.”²⁸ In addition, the growing economic problems the country was facing contributed to the popularity of Gorbachev’s reforms among Bulgarians.²⁹

With the exception of Poland, which initiated the 1989 sequence of collapse, the breakdown of communist rule in all the other five countries has to be discussed in the context of the changes that had already taken place elsewhere in the Soviet bloc. This revolutionary wave represented in itself a key external factor, termed the “snowballing effect.” The Bulgarian revolution of 1989 was initiated by the ousting from power of Zhivkov during a historic meeting of the CC of the BCP, held a day after the fall of the Berlin Wall. It may be argued that the external context, particularly the negotiated revolutions in Poland and Hungary, as well as the peaceful revolution in East Germany, influenced enough members of the CC of the BCP to support the faction led by Petar Mladenov and Andrei Lukanov and to force Zhivkov to retire. As Vesselin Dimitrov argues: “Bulgaria’s transition to democracy began not as a result of internal evolution but rather as a part of

an attempt by some of Zhivkov’s colleagues to save their power at a time when the communist bloc was collapsing around them.”³⁰

Although the fall of Zhivkov did not represent a genuine change of regime in Bulgaria, the reformist wing of the BCP that came to power was willing to engage in limited reforms. However, in the context of the continuation of the revolutionary changes in the former Soviet bloc – one should be reminded that the “velvet revolution” in Czechoslovakia was sparked on 17 November – Bulgaria witnessed an unprecedented mobilization of civic groups. A non-communist political opposition took shape quite rapidly and campaigned for the establishment of a truly democratic polity. The unfolding of events during the first half of December 1989 showed clearly that the political transformation in Bulgaria was taking an irreversible course, as the opposition groups united in a single political organization, the Union of Democratic Forces (UDF) on 7 December, then managed to mobilize public support, especially in urban areas, and put pressure on the ruling BCP to open negotiations in order to ensure an effective transition to a democratic system. The bloody revolution of 16–22 December in Romania made clear that the initiation of roundtable talks with the UDF was indeed the most appropriate option for ensuring the survival of the BCP into the new political order.

Nation-Specific Factors

Regime Political Culture

As mentioned, the present work employs a political culture approach in order to explain the nature – negotiated or non-negotiated, violent or nonviolent – as well as the place each of the six countries discussed occupies in the 1989 sequence of collapse. Furthermore, this author contends that the key nation-specific

factors that explain the nature of the 1989 revolutions in ECE are two varieties of political culture defined, following Jowitt's analytical framework, as regime political culture and community political culture. In the case of Bulgaria, these two political cultures were not fundamentally adversarial throughout the entire communist period; on the contrary, there were periods when the two tended to converge. Yet, the political culture of the Bulgarian communist regime and that of the community became increasingly adversarial in 1988–89. In determining the nature of the 1989 revolutions in ECE, two features of the regime political cultures prove to be significant: coherence of the power elite and degree of emancipation from Moscow. So it is in the Bulgarian case, where the 1989 revolution was non-negotiated but nonviolent. Its specificity, as noted, resided in the fact that it was preceded by a palace coup that led to the demotion of Zhivkov on 10 November 1989.

The transformation of Bulgaria into a “people’s democracy” was gradually achieved over the period September 1944–December 1947. Soviet troops entered Bulgarian territory on 8 September 1944. The next day, 9 September, the political coalition known as the Fatherland Front–FF (*Otechestven Front*–OF), in which the communists played a central role, took over the government. Within the new power structure, the communists took charge of two crucial positions: the ministries of justice and the interior.³¹ With Soviet backing, the Bulgarian Workers Party [Communist]–BWP (*Bulgarska Rabotnicheska Partiya [Komunisti]*–BRP[K]) made use of the entire repertoire of political violence against the representatives of the old political order in order to consolidate its power. The primary targets were the Bulgarian Agrarian National Union–BANU (*Bulgarski Zemedelski Naroden Soyuz*–BZNS) and the Bulgarian Social Democratic Party–BSDP (*Bulgarska Sotsialdemokraticheska Partiya*–BSDP). On 8 September 1946, the electorate was called to decide about the future form of

government, i.e., monarchy or republic, via a referendum. Around 92 percent of the electorate participated in the referendum, of whom some 96 percent voted in favor of a republican form of government. As a consequence, Bulgaria was officially declared a republic on 15 September 1946.³²

The elections for the Grand National Assembly (GNA), held on 27 October 1946, were overwhelmingly won by the communists. Of a total number of 465 seats, the Fatherland Front won 366 seats, of which 277 went to the BWP, while to the democratic opposition only 99.³³ Following the elections, Georgi Dimitrov, the most prominent personality among the Bulgarian communists, was appointed prime minister on 7 November 1946. The next step taken by the Bulgarian communists was to silence the political opposition. Nikola Petkov, the leader of the splinter group BANU–Nikola Petkov Party and one of the most important figures of the democratic opposition, was arrested in June 1947 under accusations of conspiracy against the government. Subjected to a mock trial in August 1947, Petkov was sentenced to death and hanged in September the same year. The transition to a single-party system was completed through the sanctioning of a new constitution by the Bulgarian GNA, the so-called Dimitrov Constitution, which was in many respects similar to the “Stalin constitution” of 1936 in the USSR.³⁴

Taking into consideration the interdependence between Bulgarian domestic politics and the political turns in the Kremlin, this author contends that one can divide the communist epoch in Bulgaria into five periods, as follows: (1) 1948–53; (2) 1953–56; (3) 1956–62; (4) 1962–85; and (5) 1985–89. The first period, 1948–53, represented the most repressive phase of the “revolution from above” in Bulgaria. The Bulgarian Workers Party returned to the name of Bulgarian Communist Party (BCP) in December 1948. Not long afterwards, the party lost its supreme leader. Dimitrov, who had returned from the Soviet Union in

November 1945 to take over the leadership of the BWP, passed away in July 1949. His successor, who took over the positions of party leader and prime minister, was Chervenkov. The new leader unleashed a wave of terror against the real or perceived enemies within the party, as well as the Bulgarian society in general, as a display of obedience towards the Soviet Union and a means of consolidating his personal power.³⁵

In terms of party purges, the Kostov trial represents the most noteworthy event. An important figure of the BCP, Traicho Kostov was demoted in March 1949 from his governmental position and appointed head of the Bulgarian national library. He was subsequently put on trial in December 1949, sentenced to death and executed. Following Kostov's execution, the BCP went through systematic purges. All in all, the purges carried out under the rule of Chervenkov affected some 100,000 people. This meant that approximately one in five party members was affected by the purges, considering that the party had reached a membership of 496,000 by the Fifth Congress of the BCP held in December 1948.³⁶ Chervenkov, Bulgaria's "little Stalin," strove to emulate the Soviet model by forcing the peasantry into collective farms, imposing a rapid pace of industrialization and, as has been pointed out, savagely repressing those identified as enemies of the regime. The elimination of the "unsound" elements from the party ranks ensured that monolithism of the party and subservience to the Kremlin remained the fundamental values to be inculcated in the party members.³⁷

As for the extent of the communist terror in Bulgaria, it should be mentioned that many of those who initially resisted communist power were simply executed without trial. The figures advanced for the total number of the victims of this first wave of terror vary between 625 and 30,000 individuals. Between December 1944 and April 1945, a People's Tribunal for War Criminals functioned and pronounced 9,155 sentences. Of this total number, 2,730

were death sentences while 1,305 were sentences to life imprisonment.³⁸ Furthermore, between 1944 and 1953 approximately 12,000 individuals were interned in detention camps. Around 25,000 individuals were deported over the period 1948–53. Some estimates put the number of political prisoners detained during the period 1944–62 in communist Bulgaria to as many as 186,000.³⁹ This stage in the history of Bulgarian communism was characterized not only by attempts violently to eliminate from the community the supposed "enemies of the people," but also quietly to oust those who were ethnically different. Even at the height of Bulgarian Stalinism, the conspicuous efforts aimed at building a classless society could not obscure the issue of conflicting ethnic identities. In terms of identity politics, the immigration to Turkey of members of the Turkish minority in Bulgaria was encouraged under Chervenkov. In January 1950, the regime in Sofia announced that it was ready to permit the emigration of some 250,000 ethnic Turks. Up to the closing of the border between Bulgaria and Turkey in 1952, Ankara permitted the immigration of only some 162,000 ethnic Turks from Bulgaria.⁴⁰

The death of Stalin and the initiation of the New Course put an end to this stage of the Bulgarian "revolution from above." The period 1953–56 was characterized by the efforts of the Bulgarian communists under the lead of Chervenkov to emulate the New Course initiated in the Kremlin. In terms of domestic policies, the changes envisaged: (1) a shift of emphasis from producer goods to consumer goods, in order to raise the standard of living and thus avoid outbreaks of social discontent; (2) a relaxation of the terror that accompanied the previous stage of the "revolution from above;" and (3) a change of power structure at the highest level of the party-state. The Second FYP 1953–57 reflected the new economic policy in the sense that light industry and agriculture were to receive a larger share of investments. In terms of repressive

policies, the terror directed against the Bulgarian society as a whole was diminished during the period 1954–56, a trend that was reflected by a reduction in the number of internments in detention camps.⁴¹ The changes at the level of the BCP power structure took place in the aftermath of the Sixth Congress of the BCP, which was held during the period 25 February–3 March 1954. The most significant amendment – meant to create the impression of “collective leadership” in accordance with the New Course and in response to pressure coming from the Kremlin – was Chervenkov’s renunciation of the leading position in the BCP, while keeping his post as prime minister. At the same time, the report to the Sixth BCP Congress, which Chervenkov still presented, mentioned that the party membership had decreased to 455,251 members, of whom only 368,142 were full members while 87,109 were candidate members. This dramatic decrease in party membership reflected implicitly the harsh campaign of purges the BCP had undergone under his leadership, in the aftermath of the Kostov case. On 4 March 1954, it was announced that Zhivkov had become the new first secretary of the BCP, while Chervenkov was given only a place in the Politburo.⁴² Zhivkov’s road to absolute power started in that moment, while the BCP shifted from a Stalinist regime of personal power to a bipolar leadership structure.

The next event of crucial importance for the BCP would take place in the aftermath of Khrushchev’s condemnation of Stalin’s personality cult. Given the subservience of Bulgarian communists to Moscow, the first consequence of de-Stalinization in this country was a renewed attack on the political legacy of Chervenkov. This happened during a plenary session of the CC of the BCP that was held on 2–6 April 1956. As first secretary of the BCP, Zhivkov referred to the manifestation of “personality cult” in Bulgaria and the repression conducted against party members. As a consequence, Chervenkov lost also the position of

prime minister, which went to Anton Yugov, who had previously served as minister of internal affairs. Although demoted from the premiership, Chervenkov was not ousted from the BCP inner circle of power: he retained his place within the Politburo and was given the position of deputy prime minister. The plenum of April 1956 operated a change in the BCP leadership structure giving birth to a ruling troika – composed of Zhivkov, Yugov and Chervenkov, which replaced the hitherto bipolar leadership Zhivkov-Chervenkov.⁴³ Faced with de-Stalinization, Zhivkov proved that he was able to adopt flexible policies and fight the “personality cult,” while ensuring at the same time the unity of the party. He thus convinced the leadership in Moscow that he was the right man to lead the BCP and enforce the changes imposed by the new political vision in the Kremlin. Each of the troika members sought to strengthen his power base within the party, and their efforts gave the impression of more or less explicit factions opposing each other within the BCP. However, the “official” group that supported the party leader Zhivkov overpowered the others.⁴⁴

It was the renewed de-Stalinization campaign launched by Khrushchev at the Twenty-Second Congress of the CPSU held on 17–31 October 1961 that permitted Zhivkov ultimately to oust his rivals from power. Chervenkov was the first to fall victim to the new wave of de-Stalinization. In November 1961, he was accused of having cultivated an “improper and artificial personality cult,” and thus demoted from the position of deputy prime minister and deprived of his membership in the Politburo.⁴⁵ With the occasion of the Eighth BCP Congress, which was held on 5–14 November 1962, Yugov, Zhivkov’s other rival, was dismissed from the position of prime minister that he had occupied since April 1956.⁴⁶ For his part, Yugov was charged with “crude violations of socialist legality” and accused of “undermining the unity of the party.”⁴⁷ Having ousted his main rivals from power, Zhivkov assumed both the

premiership and the leadership of the party. This moment marked the beginning of the long era of Zhivkoism, which lasted from 1962 to 1989. While Zhivkov remained practically an undisputed leader of the Bulgarian party-state until his removal from power, Zhivkoism started its decline in 1985.

According to Rothschild, the main characteristic of Zhivkov's dictatorship in Bulgaria was stability.⁴⁸ The period 1962–85 was indeed an epoch of stability that was definitively marked by the personality and leadership style of Zhivkov. At the same time, that period was characterized by continuity in terms of the major traits of the political culture of Bulgarian communism, i.e., unity of the party and subservience to the Moscow line. As far as Zhivkov's leadership style is concerned, Rothschild aptly observes: "Eschewing the ostentatious megalomania and dandyism of Ceaușescu and Tito, he resembled more the modest and stubborn Kádár, though without his principled commitment to structural reform."⁴⁹ At the same time, very much like Ceaușescu in Romania, Zhivkov sought to legitimize his regime of personal power and actually succeeded in achieving this over the period 1962–85 through a mix of communist consumerism and ethnic nationalism.

Regarding the modernization drive, Bulgaria witnessed, as mentioned already, an economic leap forward during its Third FYP 1958–60, which did produce a decisive breakthrough in terms of the industrial development of the country, in spite of the rather numerous unfulfilled tasks. By the end of the subsequent Fourth FYP 1961–65, the structure of the economy and of the population had changed significantly. Due to industrial development, large numbers of village dwellers moved to cities, where they could find better-paid jobs and improved living conditions. It was the Zhivkov regime that managed to raise the standard of living of the population. Unlike any other satellite country, the modernizing dimension of the communist dictatorship in Bulgaria was

strengthened by the economic support provided by the Soviet Union. By avoiding the adoption of independent-path policies like Ceaușescu's in neighboring Romania, Zhivkov managed to secure long term economic support from Moscow, which in turn reinforced his position as the undisputed leader of the Bulgarian party-state.

As for the nationalizing dimension of Zhivkov's dictatorship, special emphasis was put on an identity politics centered on history, language and tradition throughout the 1970s. Although the official stance of the regime did not deviate from the traditional subservience to the Kremlin, the emphasis on tradition and national identity did contribute to the consolidation of the Zhivkov regime. The new cultural policy was largely devised and carried out by Zhivkov's heir apparent, i.e., his daughter Lyudmila (1942–81), who became the youngest member of the BCP Politburo and was responsible for cultural policies.⁵⁰ In 1981, the regime organized lavish ceremonies to celebrate the 1,300th anniversary of the founding of the Bulgarian state in 681 A.D. As part of the pompous celebration of the ancient roots of the Bulgarians, a megaproduction in three parts, the movie *Khan Asparukh* (338 min.) directed by Lyudmil Staikov, was released the same year. *Khan Asparukh* reconstructs the history of the great migration of the Bulgarians that started in the steppes of Central Asia and ended with their settlement on the present day territory south of the Danube. Subsequently, a shortened version (95 min.) dubbed in English of Staikov's cinematic reconstruction of the Bulgarian saga was internationally released in 1984 under the title *681 A.D.: The Glory of Khan*.⁵¹ As in Romania, where this genre of filmmaking was even more successful, the translation of historical myths in cinematic narratives underpinned the legitimation of the communist regime through history. As for Bulgaria, it is worth mentioning that Lyudmila Zhivkova's untimely death in 1981 put an end to a period not only of such

nationalist fervor, but also of increased cultural opening towards the West.

Towards the mid-1980s, however, it became clear that the BCP leadership perceived the Bulgarian nation-state as being “insufficiently national” and consequently was devising a set of nationalizing policies and practices primarily aimed at assimilating the largest historic national minority in Bulgaria, i.e., the Turkish one. At the time, the Turkish minority comprised between 830,000 and 960,000 individuals, and thus amounted to over 10 percent of the country’s total population. The most radical nationalizing measure taken by the Zhivkov regime was the campaign of changing the names of the ethnic Turks into Bulgarian, i.e. Slavic, names initiated during the winter of 1984–85.⁵² The “renaming campaign,” which was part of the so-called “revival process,” sought also to limit Islamic rituals and restrict the use of the Turkish language. It was a process accompanied by violence without match in the Soviet bloc in the 1980s. Those who opposed it were imprisoned or sent to labor camps; according to an estimate by Amnesty International, more than 100 ethnic Turks were killed during the campaign.⁵³ Internationally, the “revival process” stirred widespread outrage, especially among Muslim countries and considerably damaged relations with neighboring Turkey.

The year 1985 proved to be a turning point in more than one way: from that moment onwards the Zhivkov regime increasingly lost its internal stability in both political and economic terms, while Bulgaria became increasingly isolated in international relations. The following period, 1985–89, was one of increasing instability. Until the coming to power of Gorbachev in the Soviet Union, the monolithism of the BCP and its subservience to the Kremlin ensured the stability of Zhivkov’s modernizing and increasingly nationalizing dictatorship. Although ideological decay

did affect the party apparatus as well as the rank and file, ethnic nationalism proved to be an ideological substitute that conferred legitimacy to the BCP in the eyes of a majority of the population. With regard to this aspect, Petrova aptly noted: “The nationalization of communism prolonged the period of its relative legitimacy, which was especially important after the exhaustion of the system’s economic legitimization, which became evident in the early 1980s.”⁵⁴ However, due to the violence and bloodshed that accompanied the “renaming campaign” of 1984–85, nationalism ceased to serve as a means of legitimating Zhivkov’s personal rule. On the contrary, the policy of assimilating the Turkish population led not only to international isolation, but also to domestic ethnic tensions, which culminated with the 1989 massive wave of migration of ethnic Turks from Bulgaria to Turkey. Even more importantly, the new political line in the Kremlin affected a fundamental characteristic of the political culture of Bulgarian communism, i.e., party monolithism.⁵⁵

The 1968 Brezhnev Doctrine reinforced the conviction that the power elite in Sofia could maintain its power as long as it supported unabatedly the political line in Moscow. However, the set of reforms introduced by Gorbachev in the Soviet Union threatened among others the traditional unity of the BCP around its supreme leader. The old elite around Zhivkov feared that an emulation of the reforms introduced by Gorbachev in the Soviet Union would undermine their power. At the same time, a Gorbachevite faction emerged only cautiously within the CC of the BCP around Mladenov and Lukanov. In the favorable context of the successful 1989 revolutions in Poland, Hungary and East Germany, as well as against the backdrop of growing domestic dissatisfaction with the regime, this Gorbachevite faction managed to convince a number of the CC members to oust Zhivkov from power on 10 November 1989.

Political Cultures of Resistance

The palace coup of 10 November 1989 opened the way for a genuine regime change in Bulgaria. Nonetheless, the Gorbachevite faction of the BCP that ousted Zhivkov from power was more inclined towards “socialism with human face” rather than towards establishing a truly democratic multiparty system. As noted above, in the particular case of Bulgaria the revolution of 1989 is understood as a process initiated by the palace coup of 10 November, which gained momentum due to unprecedented mass mobilization accompanied by the structuring of the political opposition and culminated with the opening of the roundtable negotiations of January–March 1990. Such a development, however, could not have taken place in the absence of a rapid structuring of the Bulgarian political opposition throughout the year 1989 and especially after the coup of 10 November. Therefore, this section addresses the issue of the political cultures of resistance by focusing on the emergence of dissident activities and opposition groups in communist Bulgaria from the 1960s onwards. Moreover, one should mention that Bulgarian dissent gained momentum in the mid-1980s in the aftermath of two major events: (1) the launching of the “revival process,” i.e., the forced assimilation of the Turkish minority in Bulgaria; and (2) the coming to power of Gorbachev and the initiation of his program of reforms in the Soviet Union.

As shown, the “revolution from above” in Bulgaria was accompanied by a savage repression of the political enemies of the new regime. As in the rest of Sovietized Europe, the victims of the newly established communist regimes were not only fascist or pro-Nazi “elements,” but also the members of the interwar political establishment, most prominently the Agrarians. Resistance to communist power manifested itself in different ways, from political opposition to armed resistance groups that remained active until

the early 1950s. Until the early 1960s, the political opponents were gradually silenced through direct repression, imprisonment or internment in labor camps. At the same time, while the modernizing-nationalizing project devised by the Zhivkov regime in the late 1950s began to bear fruit, nuclei of independent thinking and critical stances towards the regime started to develop in the intellectual milieus. Such a process gained momentum especially from 1968 onwards.⁵⁶ Nevertheless, it was a matter of a few daring individuals who took the risk of publicly expressing their criticism towards the Zhivkov regime and not of dissident networks or organized opposition groups. The situation changed dramatically in the mid-1980s.

The 1984–85 campaign of forced assimilation of the ethnic Turks in Bulgaria led to the appearance of organized and non-violent resistance by members of the Turkish minority to this process. Thus, in the summer of 1985 philosopher Ahmed Dogan established an organization for the defense of human rights named the Turkish National Liberation Movement, which numbered at the moment of its founding some 200 members. Dogan’s initiative was rooted in the pressing need of the Turkish community in Bulgaria to organize itself in order to: resist the process of forced assimilation; spread the news about the human rights violations outside the country; and coordinate domestic protests. The Zhivkov regime reacted in force: Dogan was sentenced to twelve years in prison in 1986.⁵⁷ In short, the “revival process” led to the structuring of the first major opposition group, gathering members of the Turkish minority in Bulgaria and aimed at defending the rights of that minority. At the time, the issue of human rights defense was confined to the Turkish community in Bulgaria and did not bring together human rights activists from among the ethnic Bulgarian majority and the Turkish minority. A comparable situation could be observed in communist Romania where dissident actions by ethnic Romanians and similar actions by

members of the Hungarian minority did not evolve towards structured collaborative actions, but unfolded more often than not separately.

As shown in the section on conjunctural factors, it was the “Gorbachev factor” that had a decisive influence on the development of dissident groups among the Bulgarian ethnic majority. As in terms of regime political culture, the Bulgarian power elite followed closely the changes in Moscow; Soviet literature was always available in this country and had a significant readership. After Gorbachev’s coming to power, the Soviet literature on perestroika and glasnost became a source of inspiration for those who felt increasingly dissatisfied with Zhivkov’s dictatorship. As Kyril Drezov points out, at the time the impact of such Soviet literature on Bulgaria was quite exceptional: “Bulgaria, a country with 8.5 million population got nine-tenths of all international subscriptions to one of the standard-bearers of glasnost, *Literaturnaya Gazeta*.”⁵⁸ Eventually, several dissident groups emerged in Bulgaria in 1988–89 and played a major role in mobilizing the urban population in favor of the political opposition in the autumn of 1989. Over the period January–November 1988, at least three dissident groups made themselves known: the Independent Society for the Defense of Human Rights, the Citizens’ Committee for the Ecological Defense of Russe and the Discussion Club in Support of Glasnost and Perestroika. This third group was established at the initiative of dissident philosopher Zhelyu Zhelev and gathered those prominent intellectuals in Sofia whose political ideas ranged from reform communism to liberal democracy.

The two main currents of Bulgarian dissent, i.e., that coming from within the Turkish minority and that coming from within Bulgarian milieus increased their activism in the spring of 1989 and even intersected their paths. During the months of March and April 1989, unrest grew steadily among the ethnic Turks who

demanded to return to their Muslim names, and to be allowed to leave the country and settle in Turkey. What is more, several Bulgarian opposition groups started to support the demands of the Turkish minority.⁵⁹ Towards the end of May, violent protests by ethnic Turks occurred in several districts of the country, such as Shumen, Varna and Razgrad, and resulted in several people killed and many others wounded. In the immediate aftermath of the violent events of May 1989, some 10,000 members of the Turkish minority were expelled from Bulgaria. Subsequently, the communist regime in Sofia decided to allow the emigration of the ethnic Turks from Bulgaria.⁶⁰ As a matter of fact, the Zhivkov regime had earlier, on the basis of an agreement it signed with Turkey in 1968, allowed the emigration of the ethnic Turks for the purpose of reunification of families. Consequently, over the ten-year period of the agreement, some 130,000 ethnic Turks left Bulgaria and settled in Turkey.⁶¹ In contrast, the emigration in the aftermath of the violent events in the spring of 1989 exceeded all calculations by both Bulgarian and Turkish governments. During the period May–August 1989, some 350,000 people left the country for neighboring Turkey. It is also true that because of the treatment emigrants received in Turkey, the flow of migration was reversed during the period August–December 1989, when approximately 155,000 ethnic Turks returned to Bulgaria.⁶²

In the meantime, dissent among the Bulgarian majority increased considerably and independent groups multiplied. In early 1989, two other groups emerged: the Podkrepa (Support) Independent Trade Union was established in February in the city of Plovdiv, and the Ecoglasnost organization was founded in April in Sofia. The latter would become one of the most powerful civic organizations in communist Bulgaria. The impact of Gorbachev’s reforms on the development of independent groups in communist Bulgaria can be grasped from the very names of some of these organizations, i.e., Discussion Club in Support of Glasnost and

Perestroika, or Ecoglasnost. Popular concern with environmental issues grew rapidly in Bulgaria due to the Chernobyl nuclear disaster of April 1986, the more so that beginning in 1970 the Zhivkov regime had developed a nuclear power plant at Kozloduy, on the river Danube, on the basis of a similar Soviet design.⁶³ Furthermore, during the 1980s, the Bulgarian city of Russe was severely affected by pollution caused by a chemical complex located across the Danube in the Romanian town of Giurgiu, a situation that also led to popular mobilization. Given this widespread concern with environmental issues, some authors have argued that Ecoglasnost was the “the best expression of a specifically Bulgarian form of dissent” and the most efficient civic organization in Bulgaria in the late 1980s.⁶⁴

It should be noted, however, that the politicization of protests initially rooted in environmental issues was also present in communist Hungary. As discussed in Chapter Three, the project of the Gabčíkovo-Nagymaros dam on the Danube triggered open protests by Hungarian environmentalists from the early 1980s onwards, which culminated with the massive demonstration of 2 September 1988 when some 35,000 people demonstrated in Budapest against the project. Nevertheless, the way many members and sympathizers of Ecoglasnost turned their initial environmental activism into political dissent helps one understand better the main features of the political cultures of resistance in Bulgaria from the mid-1980s onwards. Two of these features are particularly important for the present analysis, namely: (1) the development of civic groups under the influence of Gorbachev’s reform program; and (2) the gradual transformation of these civic groups into nuclei of political opposition.

In the summer of 1989, the mass migration of the ethnic Turks from Bulgaria to Turkey also led to the mobilization of civic groups and human rights activists. Such actions were taking place at a moment when communist rule was already collapsing in Poland

and Hungary. Ultimately, environmental activism proved to be the platform that permitted the mobilization of large crowds, and thus contributed to the initiation of the regime change in Bulgaria. On 3 November 1989, Ecoglasnost initiated a march in the capital city Sofia in order to present to the Bulgarian authorities a petition on environmental issues signed by some 12,000 people. Quite unexpectedly, around 10,000 people joined the march. It was the palace coup organized by a Gorbachevite faction of the BCP and not the protests from below that provoked the fall of Zhivkov one week after this march through the Bulgarian capital city. Nevertheless, the emerging civil society in Bulgaria did play a major role in the subsequent revolutionary changes that led eventually to the establishment of a truly democratic polity in that country.

The political transformation in Bulgaria took an irreversible course in early December 1989, when the non-communist political opposition decided to join forces. On 7 December 1989, several emerging political parties and civic organizations formed the Union of Democratic Forces (UDF).⁶⁵ Zhelev, who had initiated the Discussion Club in Support of Glasnost and Perestroika in 1988, became the leader of this political alliance. The UDF was particularly successful in mobilizing the educated urban strata and in organizing large demonstrations in favor of the continuation of the democratization process. Under the pressure of street protests, the ruling BCP proposed during a CC meeting held on 11–13 December 1989 the abolishment of Article 1 in the Bulgarian constitution, which guaranteed the leading role of the communist party. The article in question would, however, be officially revoked only on 15 January 1990.

For its part, the UDF organized a massive popular demonstration on 14 December in the capital city Sofia, which demonstrated clearly that the political opposition had become a serious contender for power. From mid-December 1989 onwards, the political changes in Bulgaria were accelerated, also under the impact of the bloody

events in Romania. On 29 December it was announced that the “revival process” was officially revoked. The decisive step towards a new political order was taken when the BCP conceded to open “roundtable negotiations” with the UDF in order to ensure an effective transition to a democratic system. The Bulgarian roundtable negotiations took place between 16 January and 15 May 1990.⁶⁶ Finally, the general elections of 10 and 17 June the same year, based on open political competition, marked Bulgaria’s entry into a new historical epoch.⁶⁷

Reflections on the 1989 Revolution in Bulgaria

Although the communist dictatorship in Bulgaria was of modernizing-nationalizing type, similar to that in neighboring Romania, a particular aggregation of structural, conjunctural and nation-specific factors led to a non-violent regime change in this country. Economic factors contributed to the collapse of Bulgarian communism, but their influence should not be overstated. True, economic problems did accumulate towards the late 1980s and a feeling of relative deprivation was developing among the Bulgarian population. Nevertheless, popular discontent was far from reaching the point of sparking an uprising aiming at bringing down the regime. The accumulation of structural problems in the economy and in society, however, led to the structuring of a reformist faction within the BCP. Ideological decay, defined as the “dying of the faith” in the modernizing and nationalizing project developed under the long rule of Zhivkov also contributed to the breakdown of the regime. The Zhivkov regime aimed to make use of nationalism as an ideological substitute for the failure of its modernization project, but the so-called “revival process” led to international isolation and diplomatic conflict with Turkey. Thus, the campaign of forced assimilation of the Turkish minority carried

out in the mid-1980s ultimately led to a general dissatisfaction with the rule of Zhivkov.

Conjunctural factors were of prime importance in the Bulgarian case. More than in other countries, the “Gorbachev factor” operated at societal level, in the sense that it directly contributed to the development of dissident groups among the Bulgarian ethnic majority in 1988–89, as well as to the articulation of criticism towards the regime. The change of the political line in Moscow and the reforms introduced by Gorbachev also affected the unity of the BCP around its supreme leader, Zhivkov, and prompted the cautious emergence of a Gorbachevite faction within the ruling elite. The “snowballing effect” precipitated the process of political changes in Bulgaria. In the favorable context of the successful 1989 revolutions in Poland, Hungary and East Germany, the Gorbachevite faction in the BCP ousted Zhivkov from power one day after the fall of the Berlin Wall. Although the day of the coup, 10 November 1989, is celebrated in Bulgaria as the fall of communism, this was only the end of the Zhivkov regime, which, given its unusual longevity, the Bulgarians indeed identified with communist rule. Yet, it was only after the unification of the opposition in the UDF and the mobilization of the urban population in December 1989 that political changes took an irreversible course towards the dismantling of the one-party system. The violent events in Romania also accelerated the pace of change towards political pluralism in Bulgaria.

CHAPTER SEVEN

Romania

Romania occupies the last place in the 1989 sequence of collapse of communist dictatorships in ECE. The Romanian revolution lasted from 16 to 22 December 1989 and was the only violent revolution among those of 1989. The revolution was sparked in the city of Timișoara and spread to the rest of the country. On 21 December, the population of Bucharest joined the revolution, and the communist regime was finally brought down on 22 December 1989. Over 1,100 individuals were killed and some 3,300 were wounded during these events in Romania. The explanatory model presented above is consistently applied to the case of Romania in order to explain this fundamental difference between the revolution in this country and the rest of the 1989 revolutions. As shown below, a particular aggregation of structural, conjunctural and nation-specific factors made violence unavoidable and placed Romania at the end of the sequence of collapse of communist dictatorships in ECE. When examining the issue of economic failure, the Romanian case seems to illustrate best the structural

Notes for this chapter begin on page 394.

flaws of state socialism. Among the communist countries that experienced a regime change in 1989, Romania was the one in which economic conditions were most difficult. Despite the conspicuous failure of the regime to provide for its population, Romania was the last country to exit from communism in 1989. Consequently, one is compelled to assess what factors delayed the development of social protest in Ceaușescu's Romania. After the period of Stalinist terror, the cooptation by the regime of large strata of society functioned rather well until the economic crisis made a significant part of the population think in terms of biological survival. Dissident networks appeared only slowly and a cross-class alliance emerged, for a little while, only in December 1989. This chapter demonstrates that two fundamental features of regime political culture determined the violent nature of the 1989 revolution in Romania, namely the cohesion of the power elite and its degree of emancipation from the Soviet Union. While, the power elite in Romania preserved its monolithism until December 1989, it managed to emancipate itself from Moscow especially from April 1964 onwards. As a consequence, the Romanian revolution of 1989 was not only non-negotiated, but also violent, since the regime felt confident enough to order the repression apparatus to shoot to kill and had its orders obeyed in the first stage of the revolution.¹

Structural Factors

Economic Failure

This section examines the economic performance of the communist regime in Romania over the period 1945–89. Under communist rule, major policy decisions regarding economic development were made in accordance with the external

constraints and the political goals of the local power elite. Starting from this assertion, this author argues that the period 1945–89 can be divided into four distinct periods, as follows: (1) humble imitation of the Soviet model, 1945–56; (2) development and emancipation, 1956–64; (3) closely watched relaxation, 1964–77; and (4) crisis and decline, 1977–89. These four periods are analyzed below in order to illustrate the relationship between economic decline and the final demise of Romanian communism.

The Romanian communists did not come to power with a precise economic and social agenda. During the period 1945–56, the small group of local communist militants brought to power by the Red Army in the aftermath of World War II managed to maintain its position by displaying total loyalty towards Moscow and humbly emulating the Soviet model. Thus, the new power elite acted resolutely for a rapid transformation of the economic system of the country into a “command economy” on the Soviet model. In the immediate aftermath of the war, Romania's economic performance was seriously affected by the burden of war reparations, and by two years of severe draught and subsequent famine (1946 and 1947). The amount of war reparations was officially fixed by the armistice agreement to USD 300 million to be paid in kind at the 1938 prices. Moreover, USD 508 million were to be paid additionally as a compensation for the goods appropriated by Romania during the 1918–40 period of rule over the territories of Bessarabia and Bukovina. Apart from this, the Soviet Union engaged after 1945 in the exploitation of the natural resources of the country by means of sixteen joint Soviet-Romanian companies called Sovroms. For instance, Sovrompetrol exported as much as two thirds of Romania's oil production to the Soviet Union.²

After the forced abdication of King Michael I on 30 December 1947, the Assembly of Deputies passed the very same day Law No. 363, which proclaimed the founding of the People's Republic

of Romania. In this new political context, the law on the nationalization of large private businesses was passed on 11 June 1948. This affected industrial, mining and transport companies, as well as banks and insurance companies. During the period November 1948–April 1950, further steps were taken to nationalize smaller businesses and a segment of the urban housing sector.³ In addition, the regime mobilized ample private financial resources through the monetary reform of 28 January 1952.⁴ The transition from a market economy to a centrally planned economy was initiated by two annual plans for 1949 and 1950. The First Five-Year Plan (FYP) was launched in 1951. As Ghita Ionescu notes, the First FYP 1951–55 “essentially reproduced the pre-war Soviet plans of industrialization and development on a Romanian scale.”⁵ The largest share of investment was channeled towards the already developed regions, with an emphasis on producer goods.⁶ Also in 1951, the regime launched the Ten-Year Plan of Electrification and Water Management 1951–60.⁷ Collectivization of agriculture was harbingered by the Plenum of the CC of the Romanian Workers Party (RWP) of 3–5 March 1949. The first five collective farms were established on 24 July 1949, and by the end of 1949 their number had reached 56.⁸ However, the completion of the collectivization of Romanian agriculture proved to be more difficult than previously thought because of a steady opposition from a major part of the peasant population.⁹ By 1959, only 27.3 percent of the total arable land belonged to collective farms, while private farms still accounted for 26 percent.¹⁰

In his report to the Second Congress of the RWP, held on 23–28 December 1955, Gheorghe Gheorghiu-Dej announced that the First FYP was fulfilled in terms of gross industrial production. Nevertheless, he had to admit that the plan targets had not been met in some industrial branches such as steel and laminated steel, coal, coke and coking coal, cement, cellulose, textiles, footwear, sugar, as well as dairy products and fish.¹¹ In

the same report to the Second Congress of the party, Gheorghiu-Dej also referred to the directives for the Second FYP 1956–60. He stressed that the Second FYP would continue to put a strong emphasis on industrial development, predominantly on oil and petrochemical industries, steel, electric power production, coal, and nonferrous metallurgy.¹² For the Second FYP, the regime envisaged the same policy of sustained economic development following the Stalinist pattern.¹³

The year 1956 brought major changes to the overall political, as well as economic, strategy of the Romanian communists. Khrushchev’s “secret speech” shook deeply the power elite in Bucharest, which felt directly threatened by the de-Stalinization campaign. An unexpected chain of events, which culminated with the Hungarian revolution of 23 October–4 November 1956, offered a much needed support to the power elite in Bucharest. The Romanian communists reacted swiftly, condemned the Hungarian revolution, and displayed absolute loyalty towards the Soviets. This way, the RWP leadership managed to buy time and devise a strategy of political survival based on a cautious return to Romanian traditional values combined with a program of extensive industrialization. The importance of the year 1956 resides in the fact that, in reaction to the external events in Moscow and Budapest, the ruling elite in Bucharest became concerned with legitimating itself in the eyes of its population. A first measure taken by the regime was to modify its short-term economic strategy, in the sense of allotting a larger share to consumption and boosting the production of consumer goods. Gheorghiu-Dej announced this shift in economic policy in his speech delivered to the RWP Plenum of 27–29 December 1956: “We must orient our efforts towards a massive development of agricultural production, towards the development of the light and food-processing industries, as well as the housing sector, which are

closely linked to the raising of the living standard of the working population.”¹⁴

Yet, the Second FYP presented many inconsistencies. At the time, Gheorghiu-Dej was waging a struggle for political survival and consequently the economic issues were pushed to the background. From Gheorghiu-Dej's exposé to the national meeting of peasants and laborers in the socialist sector of agriculture, held on 3 April 1958, it could be grasped that the party was not satisfied with the results of the second FYP. The supreme leader spoke of the increased output over the previous year, 1957, of some major industries, such as steel, electric power, oil, natural gas, construction materials and machinery, as well as consumer goods. However, Gheorghiu-Dej compared the production of 1957 with the production of the year 1938 and not with that of the year 1955.¹⁵ Definitely not pleased with the economic achievements of the Second FYP, the party leadership decided to terminate it one year before the scheduled period. Subsequently, at the Third Congress of the RWP in June 1960 was launched the Six-Year Plan 1960–65.

As noted above, the Hungarian Revolution of 1956 offered the Romanian communist elite a wonderful opportunity to display total subservience to the Kremlin and thus avoid the replacement of Gheorghiu-Dej and his men with a Khrushchevite faction. Such a stance by the Romanian communists led ultimately to the withdrawal of Soviet troops from Romania in July 1958. At the same time, the RWP and its supreme leader had to legitimate themselves in the eyes of the population after 1956. This implied not only a revival of autochthonous values, but also some economic improvement, as mentioned. Thus, Gheorghiu-Dej's report to the enlarged plenum of the CC of the RWP, held on 13–14 July 1959, was almost entirely dedicated to the strategy of the party for increasing the living standard of the population.¹⁶ Efforts in this direction had already been made in the immediate aftermath of

the Hungarian revolution, in order to avoid the spreading of unrest to Romania. During the period 1956–60, 82.9 percent of the national income went to consumption and only 17.1 percent was allotted to accumulation.¹⁷ Furthermore, during the period 1958–64 Romania's economic collaboration with the West gradually became significant. An achievement of the 1950s was the completion of the Ten-Year Plan of Electrification and Water Management 1951–60. Large investments were undertaken, and new power plants whose installed capacity amounted to 1,039 MW were built. Compared to 1950, when the overall installed capacity was of only 740 MW, in 1960 this capacity reached 1,779 MW.¹⁸ All in all, the Electrification Plan 1951–60 was quite successful and made a decisive contribution to raising the living standard of the population during the following decade. Thus, Gheorghiu-Dej referred to the provisions of the Six-Year Plan 1960–65 and reiterated the determination of the regime to continue its industrialization policy in his report to the meeting of 8 May 1961, which was dedicated to the celebration of 40 years since the establishment of the party.¹⁹

A dispute on the strategy of economic development adopted by the power elite in Bucharest surfaced when Khrushchev announced his project of strengthening the economic cooperation within the Soviet bloc. In June 1962, the CMEA adopted a document entitled “Principles for the International Division of Labor,” which stressed the idea of “socialist economic collaboration” in the sense of developing differentiated economic profiles within the communist bloc, i.e., between the industrialized north and the agrarian south. The project was strongly supported by Czechoslovakia and East Germany, the most industrialized Soviet satellites. Gheorghiu-Dej opposed such ideas, the more so that Romania had already started in 1961 the building of a large integrated iron and steel works in the town of Galați, which was finally inaugurated in 1966.²⁰ The initial reluctance of the Soviets to support the Galați steel mill

project contributed decisively to the economic opening of communist Romania towards the West. Moreover, Romania started to produce machinery and equipment under Western licenses.²¹ The power elite in Bucharest also engaged in other major collaborative economic projects outside the CMEA. In order to boost their hydroelectric power production, Romania and Yugoslavia signed on 30 November 1963 in Belgrade a convention concerning the building of a large hydroelectric and navigation complex on the Danube at Porțile de Fier (Iron Gates) with an installed capacity of 2,050 MW. The Iron Gates worksite was opened on 7 September 1964 in the presence of the communist leaders of Romania and Yugoslavia, Gheorghiu-Dej and Tito.²²

Another conflict within the CMEA opened when geographer E. B. Valev, backed by the Soviet leadership, published in February 1964 an article concerning the creation of an “interstate economic complex” composed of parts of southern Soviet Union, south-east Romania and northern Bulgaria.²³ The project envisaged cooperation between the Soviet Union, Romania and Bulgaria for the creation of a so-called Lower Danube Economic Complex encompassing a surface of 150,000 square kilometers, of which Romania would have contributed with 100,000, Bulgaria with 38,000 and the Soviet Union with 12,000. The Romanian communists perceived the idea of a transnational economic region as a direct threat to their independence from the Kremlin and rejected the project.²⁴ The policy of independence from Moscow culminated with the so-called Declaration of April 1964, which may be considered the “declaration of autonomy” of the Romanian communists.

Gheorghiu-Dej died on 19 March 1965, and the party Plenary Meeting of 22 March sanctioned the election of Nicolae Ceaușescu as secretary general. On 19 July 1965, in his report to the Ninth Congress of the Romanian Communist Party (RCP), Ceaușescu stated: “In the future, the industrialization of the country, especially the development of heavy industry with an emphasis on the heavy

machinery industry will remain at the core of our party’s policy.”²⁵ Throughout his period in power, Ceaușescu would pursue this policy with unabated determination. The table presented below reflects the distribution between the consumption fund and accumulation fund over the period 1951–89.²⁶ Over the five five-year periods that make up the interval 1951–75, the accumulation fund grew steadily with the exception of the 1956–60 period, when the party made some hasty adjustments in the aftermath of the Hungarian revolution in order to raise the share of consumption.

Five-year period	Consumption fund	Accumulation fund
1951–55	75.7	24.3
1956–60	82.9	17.1
1961–65	74.5	25.5
1966–70	70.5	29.5
1971–75	66.3	33.7
1976–80	64.0	36.0
1981–85	69.3	30.7
1986–90	74.3	25.7

Consequently, Romania experienced a period of economic achievements between 1964 and 1977. Writing in 1967 on the economic progress of Romania, John Michael Montias has observed: “Industrial output has indeed grown very fast; health conditions have vastly improved; education has spread; new technical skills have been developed; and consumption levels have risen since the late 1930s.”²⁷

In 1973, the world economy experienced the first oil shock. The RCP leadership overlooked the serious implications of the oil crisis, and adamantly pursued a policy of massive expansion of the

metallurgical, petrochemical and heavy machinery industries. Moreover, the central planners in Bucharest paid little attention to the fact that beginning in 1972–73 Romania shifted from an energy surplus to a net energy deficit.²⁸ This became clear especially after the Eleventh Congress of the RCP, held in November 1974. However, Ceaușescu stated in his report to the congress that the RCP would firmly continue the policy of socialist industrialization of the country during the FYP 1976–80.²⁹ Consequently, the regime continued to develop industrial branches characterized by high levels of energy consumption such as heavy metallurgical industries, and therefore the demand for energy in industry grew steadily. Apart from the energy-related issues, the regime engaged in extremely costly projects of doubtful economic efficiency. For example, in 1973 the RCP decided to resume the construction of the Danube–Black Sea Canal.³⁰

Let us examine the economic achievements of the period 1964–77. During this time span, the regime paid special attention to the housing sector. The official data should be taken, just like all official statistics of the communist period, with a large grain of salt. Nevertheless, the authorities did make efforts to augment housing stock and improve its quality. In 1975, new urban dwellings represented 81.7 percent of the total. For comparison, in 1965 urban housing represented only 45.3 percent of the total.³¹ Similarly, the average number of persons for each dwelling (urban and rural combined) decreased over the 1965–75 period from 3.66 in 1965, to 3.44 in 1970 and to 3.17 in 1975. In urban areas, the average number of persons per dwelling was 3.27 in 1965; 3.51 in 1970; and 3.17 in 1975.³² Improvements were also made with regard to the habitational aspects of urban living. The number of newly built flats with three or more rooms increased, therefore allowing more living space per person. Thus, in 1965 the number of dwellings with at least three rooms put into occupancy

represented 25.9 percent of the total, while in 1975 the same type of dwellings made up 40.7 percent of the total.³³

Compared with the grim 1950s, the situation had changed for the better. During the period 1964–77, numerous families moved into a new flat, usually rented from the state. Some even bought their new dwellings with loans from the state through the Savings and Consignment Bank (*Casa de Economii și Consemnațiuni*–CEC).³⁴ Domestic production of household appliances also gained momentum. Refrigerators, cooking, washing and sewing machines, vacuum cleaners and TV and radio sets entered the homes of many Romanians. Until 1968, passenger vehicles were not manufactured in Romania, but imported mainly from the Soviet Union, Czechoslovakia and East Germany. In the second half of the 1960s, French (Renault) and Italian (Fiat) cars were imported as well. However, on 20 August 1968, the Pitești Automobile Plant was inaugurated, and it started manufacturing cars under a license purchased from Renault. Production started with the Dacia 1100 model and continued from 1969–70 onwards with the Dacia 1300.³⁵ As a consequence, many families managed to buy their first car, usually a Dacia 1300. Gasoline was still cheap in the late 1960s–early 1970s, and numerous families could spend their summer holidays away from home, usually on the Black Sea Coast or in the Carpathians.³⁶ The party also encouraged a better use of leisure time by the population. For instance, the first issue of the *Scânteia Almanac*, the offspring of the party newspaper *Scânteia*, published in 1967, pays appreciable attention to tourism. It contains, among other things, useful lists of the most relevant museums, historical monuments and sites, spas and mountain resorts, petrol stations and garages. This almanac represents a valuable source for the analysis of party policy towards leisure time and tourism. For instance, one can understand that something had changed in this respect for the worse by the end of the period

discussed by examining *Scânteia Almanac 1977*, in which not a single article refers to tourism or leisure.³⁷

Accordingly, the major characteristics of the economic policy enforced by the party during the period 1977–89 can be summarized as follows: continuation of massive investments in heavy industry (steel and iron, heavy machinery) and launch of a series of gigantesque and extremely costly projects, such as the Danube–Black Sea Canal and the “systematization” of the capital city Bucharest. In comparison, Western economies entered in the 1970s the fifth industrial age, i.e., the age of electronics and information technology. At that time, the Soviet-type economies, including the Romanian one, were more or less confined to the third industrial age, i.e., the age of steel and organic chemistry.³⁸ In addition, the economy of communist Romania was highly centralized. This excessive centralization in an age of increasing “time-space compression” contributed significantly to the economic collapse of the communist regime.

Although the crude oil reserves of the country were diminishing rapidly, the party decided to increase steadily the investments in the petrochemical industry, and thus new installations were built. A large petrochemical complex was inaugurated in 1979 at Midia-Năvodari, on the Black Sea coast.³⁹ This complex was projected to process crude oil imported on the basis of a bilateral trade agreement with Iran, by which Romania was supposed to receive 4 million tons of crude oil yearly in exchange for Romanian-made machinery and equipment. However, in 1979, the same year when the Midia petrochemical complex was inaugurated, an Islamic Revolution took place in Iran, Shah Muhammad Reza Pahlavi was deposed and the trade agreement was revoked.⁴⁰ Until the end of the communist rule in Romania, the Midia-Năvodari petrochemical complex never worked at full capacity. As Brus observes, the Soviet bloc countries imported technologies from the West which served to produce standard goods instead of being

a ground for innovation. The inability of state enterprises to assimilate and develop the technologies imported from the West, Brus further argues, led to their poor performance in the field of foreign trade.⁴¹ Romania was no exception in this respect. Relying increasingly on Western credits, the regime in Bucharest also imported Western licences in order to produce goods that would boost its exports. The outcome of such projects was disappointing. This was the case of the second French-Romanian joint venture, which was established in the field of car manufacturing in the mid-1970s. The Olcit enterprise was located in the city of Craiova and produced compact cars under a licence from the French manufacturer Citroën.⁴² Another costly project was the ROMBAC project dedicated to the production of a Romanian commercial airplane under a British licence.⁴³

A series of gigantic projects of questionable economic efficiency deepened economic imbalances. Of these, the most prominent was the above-mentioned Danube–Black Sea Canal. A first attempt at building a canal between the Danube and the Black Sea occurred in the beginning of communist rule in Romania. The worksite was inaugurated in the summer of 1949, but it was actually used as a labor camp for the “enemies of the people.” Technical problems and the lack of Soviet support for the project made its completion impossible and the worksite was closed in the summer of 1953.⁴⁴ The official decision to resume the building of the canal was made on 15 April 1976, during a session of the Grand National Assembly, and the official inauguration took place eight years later, on 27 May 1984. Another gigantic project envisaged the “systematization” of all urban and rural areas. In particular, Ceaușescu’s megalomaniacal plan envisaged the building of an entirely new political-administrative complex in downtown Bucharest by razing to the ground a large area, about one fifth of the municipal area around the Unirii Square.⁴⁵ In terms of the expenditure of funds and of the human sufferings incurred, the

systematization of Bucharest proved to be cataclysmic. Numerous public buildings, as well as hundreds of individual houses, were all razed to the ground.⁴⁶ At the same time, the terrible earthquake of 4 March 1977 put a supplementary burden on the economy. The number of victims amounted to 1,570 people killed and 9,300 injured. Moreover, the housing sector was seriously hit: 156,000 flats in urban areas and 21,500 dwellings in rural areas were destroyed or severely damaged. Another 336,000 flats in urban areas and 117,000 dwellings in rural areas had to be consolidated. According to Romanian estimates, the earthquake of 4 March 1977 provoked a total loss of five percent of Romania's GNP and the overall costs incurred amounted to over USD 2 billion.⁴⁷

The first signs of economic crisis had already appeared in the mid-1970s. In response, the regime introduced in 1979 price increases for gasoline, electricity, natural gas and heating fuel. At the same time, Ceaușescu, who wanted to diminish Romania's dependence on the West, engaged in a policy of reducing the country's external debt, which in late 1981 amounted to some USD 10.4 billion.⁴⁸ It was at the Plenum of the CC of the RCP held on 12–14 April 1989 that Ceaușescu proudly announced that Romania had concluded the payment of its external debt. It is still difficult to explain why the regime did not allot a larger share of the national income to consumption in order to raise the living standard of the population after April 1989, the more so that the communist secret police, the infamous Securitate, provided timely and accurate reports regarding the growing potential for protests "from below." Especially in 1989, power cuts and food shortages contributed heavily towards deepening the frustration felt by a majority of the population in Romania. As already noted, in terms of industrial consumer goods Romanian exports were not competitive. In its quest for hard currency revenues, the party thus decided to augment exports of agricultural products simultaneously with a drastic reduction of imports. Beginning in 1981–82,

Romania entered a period of chronic shortages. Food rationing measures followed shortly. Above all, bread rationing was introduced in 1981 in order to limit consumption, and it was maintained over the entire period 1981–89, except for the capital city Bucharest. Similar measures of food rationing were applied for other basic foodstuffs, such as cooking oil and sugar. Instead of taking radical measures in order to increase production the regime issued a so-called "Program of scientific alimentation of the population," which was published on 14 July 1982.⁴⁹ Such a program was meant to obscure the real causes of the crisis, i.e., the mistaken economic policy enforced by the party, and to suggest that the shortages were due to a tendency of overeating among the population. As a consequence, severe shortages of foodstuffs and other basic things, such as soap, toothpaste and detergent occurred.

Queuing for food became a daily routine. An individual who went through the experience of queuing for food recalls: "The stores that had no queue in front of them were empty. The most important queues started to form at night or at the break of dawn, especially for 'chicken' (claws, neck, head and wings) or cheese and eggs. The maximum quantity that a buyer could ask for was one kilo of cheese and thirty eggs."⁵⁰ Gasoline was also rationed. In order to reduce traffic, the regime devised all sorts of administrative measures, such as banning the circulation of private automobiles during winter. In addition, another measure meant to reduce traffic allowed people to drive their cars only every other Sunday, in accordance with their car registration number, odd or even. Queuing for gasoline was thus another humiliating experience.⁵¹ In 1982, the price of electricity rose by 30 percent, while that of heating fuel by almost 300 percent.⁵² During the 1980s, private electricity consumption represented only 7.0 percent of the total consumption, but the population had to bear the burden of the energy crisis. This provoked major difficulties in central heating during wintertime, which had disastrous long-term

consequences for state of health of the population. Such a situation made some party old-timers, such as sociologist Pavel Câmpeanu, protest publicly against the irrational energy-rationing policies of the regime.⁵³ In the late 1980s, the conditions of life were for the greater part of the Romanian population at the lowest level among the communist countries in ECE, with the possible exception of Albania. On 15 November 1987, angered crowds of urban dwellers joined the revolted workers in the city of Braşov and publicly expressed their dissatisfaction with the Ceauşescu regime. The remark of a protester who stormed the party headquarters in this city is telling: "When I entered an office [located in the party building] I saw a pineapple for the first time in my life."⁵⁴ Another rebellious worker states: "We were working like slaves and had nothing to eat."⁵⁵ A critical intellectual, mathematician Mihai Botez, reached an appalling conclusion in 1989: "According to my estimates, between 15,000 and 20,000 people are dying each year in Romania due to the shortages of food, the lack of heating, bad transportation, etc."⁵⁶

If one applies the theory of short-term setbacks to the Romanian case, the situation in the late 1980s can be explained as follows. A "golden period" of higher consumption and rising expectations (1964–77) was followed by a period of crisis and decline in the living standard of the population (1977–89), which led to a rise of societal dissatisfaction with the regime and finally to the December 1989 upheaval. Absolute deprivation was a primary source of hatred towards the regime and made a significant contribution to the collapse of the regime. One should bear in mind that in the late 1980s a majority of the population was forced to think in terms of biological survival. Relative deprivation also played a significant role in the development of discontent. This was generated not only by the sharp division in terms of social identities, i.e., the division between "us" (population) and "them" (nomenklatura), but also by the comparison between Romania and the "fraternal" countries

which were better off. However, economic failure alone cannot explain why the communist regime in Romania survived until the end of 1989 or why it was the last in a row to fall. To explain the place Romania occupies within the 1989 sequence of collapse, one has to concentrate on other factors as well.

Ideological Decay

As already pointed out, the erosion of ideology was a phenomenon that other communist regimes in ECE experienced after Khrushchev presented his "secret speech" to the Twentieth Congress of the CPSU in February 1956. As for Romania, it may be argued that an ideology that was not embraced by many individuals simply could not enter a process of decay. Although Marxism-Leninism never truly appealed to Romanian society at large, the regime was able to make use of nationalism as an ideological substitute which, especially from 1968 onwards, served as ideological "cement" for the ethnic majority and legitimized the RCP rule.

Speaking of the Romanian political system at the end of World War II, Trond Gilberg notes: "The communists had no future in Romania. They could only hope to obtain power through extraordinary circumstances, and, by the same token, maintain themselves in power by means of force or by redefining Marxism in their own image, tradition, and culture. This they did."⁵⁷ In 1944, the RCP emerged from the underground as a group of militants that amounted to some 1,000 members. The support of the Red Army was essential in bringing the Romanian communists to power after the coup of 23 August 1944. This is why the official propaganda never addressed the issue of the RCP membership in 1944. Ceauşescu, for instance, spoke of the RCP membership in 1945, not in 1944, and claimed that the party had 20,000–25,000 "well versed activists" at the time.⁵⁸ Without the catastrophic

consequences of World War II and the subsequent Soviet occupation of the country there would have been no communist regime in Romania. The Soviet tanks brought to power not an ideology, but a small group of local communist militants who made use of methods aiming gradually at Stalin's terroristic despotism to establish and perpetuate a dictatorship. As Tucker puts it: "Those communist parties that acquired power in the aftermath of the Second World War, in most cases under conditions of Red Army occupation of their countries, presided over internal revolutionary processes which involved the forcible transplantation of Soviet communism in its highly Russified Stalinist form."⁵⁹

In the elections of 19 November 1946, the so-called "historic" parties won a majority of the vote. However, election results were falsified in favor of the so-called Bloc of Democratic Parties (*Blocul Partidelor Democratice*—BPD), which was established on 17 May 1946 and was composed of the RCP and another five parties that fully supported its policies. Although the BPD actually received only 33 percent of the votes at the country level, the official data indicated that the BPD had got 83.81 percent of the total vote.⁶⁰ Yet, the fact remains that the major part of the population did not support the communists and their allies in 1946. It is thus reasonable to suggest that the masses had little faith in the utopian dream of building a radically new society in Romania. True, deep social, economic and ethnic cleavages did exist in interwar Romania and many hoped for a change for the better in the immediate postwar period. A majority of the population, however, was simply not convinced that the communists would be able to achieve it.

At the ruling elite level, the initial utopian dreams were replaced by a ruthless power struggle. The anti-fascists, who had joined the communist movement during the underground years, were slowly marginalized after the takeover. Many were marginalized because of their ethnicity, especially those of Jewish or Hungarian origin.⁶¹

Those who had fought in the Spanish Civil War, the "Spaniards," as well as the French Resistance veterans were primarily targeted beginning in the autumn of 1952. As already noted, the year 1956 proved to be poisonous for the communist movement. Khrushchev's criticism of the "crimes of the Stalin era" deeply frightened the power elite in Bucharest. The Hungarian revolution, which demonstrated that communist ideology had undeniably lost its strength in that country, also influenced the Romanian party elite, who seized the opportunity to display its apparent support for Khrushchev's policies and eventually escape de-Stalinization. Yet, the ideological foundations of the regime were constrained to evolve in Romania as well, but not in the sense of returning to the "Leninist norms" of collective decision-making envisaged by Khrushchev.

To survive politically, the communist elite in Bucharest returned gradually and cautiously to national values. Once Khrushchev had inaugurated his de-Stalinization campaign, Romanian communists had to look elsewhere for legitimacy and thus were compelled to initiate a process of "selective community-building," i.e., to strive to create new political meanings concerning the relationship between the party and society, which the communist ruling elite and the population could share.⁶² Gheorghiu-Dej's policy of independence from the Soviet Union served this purpose. The document that epitomizes it was the above-mentioned Declaration of April 1964. This document proclaimed that all communist parties were equal within the international communist movement, and therefore they were free to choose their own path toward communism. According to this "declaration," it was not acceptable to talk about "'parent' party and 'offspring' party, 'superior' and 'subordinated' parties" within the communist movement, which was a "large family of communist and workers parties having equal rights."⁶³ Ceaușescu turned the process of "selective community-building" initiated by

his predecessor into a comprehensive nation-building process. On 21 August 1968, the RCP had the opportunity to evaluate the force of the nationalistic argument. When Ceaușescu publicly condemned the invasion of Czechoslovakia by Soviet-led WTO troops, the RCP gained widespread popular support almost overnight. Ceaușescu's nationalism acted as a substitute ideology against the backdrop of a popular distrust for Marxism-Leninism.

As for ideology, a witness recalls that “nobody took communist ideology seriously” during the 1980s.⁶⁴ People, however, did participate in regular sessions of ideological education and thus continued to live the everyday lie. Witness accounts confirm that for ordinary party members the issue of ideological training was perceived as just routine: “I was a party member and ... I was appointed manager of the political education sessions I did not dare evade the painful task... I organized ludicrous sessions, which would never last more than 15 minutes: I'd babble on some speech that sort of made me sick uttering, possibly mimicked some discussion afterwards and that was it.”⁶⁵ Other ordinary party members went further and ridiculed the “political education” sessions when asked to take the floor and read an ideological paragraph, as the following account shows: “At the meeting, I sit next to two trustworthy ladies and tell them: ‘Watch this, I'll read every other line and you'll see nobody will tell!’ And so I do. Nobody wonders, nobody protests, smiles, or ever notices anything.”⁶⁶ Nobody cared for what was read as long as it was about ideology. Nevertheless, the fact that people did participate in “political education” sessions is also telling.

Since it was not a matter of a “utopia in power,” the erosion of ideology had little influence on bringing down the regime on 22 December 1989. As Botez points out: “If utopia did not play an essential role in establishing and legitimating the communist regimes in Eastern Europe – as it did in Russia – what significance could the crisis of that utopia have?” The same author rhetorically

asks: “Could the demythologization of an ideology that had never operated as an authentic ideal damage the stability of the regimes in Eastern Europe?”⁶⁷ In the Romanian case, it was not the erosion of ideology that brought down the Ceaușescu regime, but the erosion of its substitute, the Romanian version of national-communism developed after 1968 that some call “Ceaușescuism.” The local version of national-communism that ultimately led to the legitimation of the regime was the direct result of the way in which Romanian communism evolved in the postwar period in relation to the political traditions of the country. In the conditions of the deep economic crisis of the 1980s and the radical change of policy in Moscow after Gorbachev's coming to power, “Ceaușescuism,” as an ideological substitute for Marxism-Leninism, entered a terminal crisis. After 1985, when large segments of Romanian society started to hope that Gorbachev would persuade Ceaușescu to improve their living standard, emancipation from Moscow, the cornerstone of the RCP legitimacy in the post-1968 period, ceased to appeal to a majority of the people. After the launch of reforms in the Soviet Union, independence meant nothing for the Romanian population as long as Moscow became suddenly synonymous with restructuring and openness, while independent Romania was heading towards disaster. In this sense, ideological decay understood as the demise of Ceaușescu's national-communism as an ersatz ideology did play a role in the collapse of communist rule in Romania.

Conjunctural Factors

All communist dictatorships in ECE proved to be particularly vulnerable to external conjunctural factors. External conjuncture was of crucial importance in the case of Romania. As in the rest of the 1989 revolutions in ECE, two external conjunctural factors

had a major influence upon the collapse of the communist regime in Romania, namely the “Gorbachev factor” and the “snowballing effect.” The coming to power of Gorbachev and the launch of his program of domestic reforms were events that had an immense impact on the Soviet bloc. In addition, the Soviet renunciation of the Brezhnev Doctrine was a decision of crucial importance that paved the way towards the 1989 revolutions in ECE.⁶⁸ The Brezhnev Doctrine governed the relations between Moscow and the Soviet bloc countries over the period 1968–85. Under Gorbachev, the situation changed fundamentally. Nevertheless, as Aleksandr Yakovlev recalls, the leaders of the Sovietized countries in ECE seemed unable to understand what the new leader in the Kremlin kept telling them: “From now on, the political choice in these countries belongs to their peoples, everything is going to be done in accordance with their options.”⁶⁹

The Romanian communists publicly criticized the Brezhnev Doctrine and the concept of “limited sovereignty” from the moment of its enunciation. Ceaușescu made his refusal of the Brezhnev Doctrine plain on 29 November 1968, in the front of Romanian Grand National Assembly, which gathered in a special session to celebrate fifty years from the unification of Transylvania with Romania.⁷⁰ After the Brezhnev Doctrine was denounced by Gorbachev, the relations between Moscow and Bucharest became, as Yakovlev remembers, “ridiculous and strained.” According to Yakovlev, Ceaușescu accused the Soviets of deviating from socialism and of “sinking the ship of socialism,” and blamed them for “eschewing internationalist assistance.” This supports the assertion that in 1989 Ceaușescu was faced with the terrifying image of a new Soviet Union, which was not only unwilling to provide “internationalist assistance,” but was also warning him that what was happening in Romania “had nothing to do with socialism.”⁷¹ The “Gorbachev factor” made possible the appearance of the “snowballing effect.” However, in December 1989 the

Ceaușescu regime was still standing out as an island of immobility in a sea of changes. Ceaușescu’s last meeting with Gorbachev, which took place in early December 1989 in Moscow, is telling in this respect. The encounter was occasioned by the meeting of the Consultative Political Committee of the WTO, held in Moscow on 4 December 1989. The Romanian delegation left Bucharest in the morning and flew back the same day, late in the evening.⁷² The minutes of the Gorbachev–Ceaușescu meeting reveals that Ceaușescu was not able to realize that the communist regimes in ECE had already collapsed one by one and that the peoples in those countries did not want a return to state socialism.⁷³ During the meeting, Ceaușescu argued that the actions that were taking place in some “socialist” countries in Eastern Europe were seriously threatening not only “socialism,” but also the very existence of the communist parties in the respective countries.⁷⁴ Thus, he tried to convince Gorbachev to organize, on the initiative of the RCP and the CPSU, a conference of the communist parties in ECE.

Yet, the snowball was already rolling downhill. If Ceaușescu was not able, or not willing, to grasp the true meaning of the events that had taken place in ECE that autumn of 1989, this could not escape those who served the regime. The personnel of the Romanian embassies in Warsaw, Budapest, Berlin, Prague and Sofia provided timely and comprehensive coverage of the rapidly unfolding events they were witnessing. As shown above, the Polish Roundtable Agreement of 5 April 1989 initiated the “snowballing effect” in ECE. Following this agreement, the Romanian embassy in Warsaw informed Bucharest in due time on the legalization of Solidarity on 17 April 1989.⁷⁵ Moreover, the Romanian ambassador in Budapest, Traian Pop, sent home on 24 May a telegram on the preparations for the reburial of Nagy.⁷⁶ From June to December 1989, the reports sent from the capital cities in ECE were almost alike: timely, accurate and detailed. Telegrams from Warsaw spoke of the first

(4 June) and the second round (18 June) of the general elections and the victory obtained by Solidarity's candidates.⁷⁷ It is worth mentioning the gloomy conclusion of a report sent from Budapest after the reburial of Nagy: "The day of 16 June 1989 can be considered as a peak moment in the process of dissolution of the socialist system [in Hungary]."⁷⁸ On 12 August, a telegram from Budapest provided the first report about groups of citizens from East Germany who were trying to emigrate to West Germany via the West German embassy in Budapest.⁷⁹

However, communist Romania tried to oppose the democratization process initiated in Poland. During the night of 19 to 20 August 1989, Ceaușescu sent an official letter to the leaderships of the "fraternal" communist parties. The letter contained the official point of view of the RCP and its supreme leader on the situation in Poland. In the evening of 21 August, the Romanian ambassador to Warsaw, Ion Teșu, was convoked to the CC of the PUWP where he received the official Polish answer to the RCP letter.⁸⁰ For their part, the Romanian communists were worried about the fate of "socialism" in Poland and the possible effects the situation in that country could have had on the "community of socialist states." The RCP also considered that the participation of Solidarity's representatives in the government was promoting the interests of "the most reactionary imperialistic circles."⁸¹ In his letter of 19 August 1989, Ceaușescu actually proposed recourse to the Brezhnev Doctrine, the same doctrine he had defiantly opposed for some twenty-one years. It is no wonder therefore that the official answer on the part of the PUWP, dated 21 August 1989, referred exactly to the principle of "non-interference in domestic affairs" in the relations between communist states, which Romania had defended since the WTO intervention in Czechoslovakia.⁸² The official response of the HSWP came on 24 August and, like the Polish answer, referred to Romania's "systematic call for the observance of the

principles of non-interference in the domestic affairs and sovereignty in the relations between socialist states." Therefore, the HSWP reply continued, the position of the RCP was "in complete disagreement with the Romanian standpoint with regard to the above-mentioned principles on which Romania based its policy in 1968 in relation to the events in Czechoslovakia."⁸³ From that moment on, the Romanian embassies continued to provide accurate reports on events such as: the decision made by the Hungarian authorities to permit GDR citizens to emigrate to the FRG;⁸⁴ the inauguration of the Mazowiecki government in Poland;⁸⁵ the dissolution of the HSWP;⁸⁶ the fall of the Berlin Wall on 9 November 1989;⁸⁷ the dismissal of Zhivkov from the position of secretary general of the CC of the BCP on 10 November;⁸⁸ and, beginning with 20 November, on the massive popular demonstrations in Prague.⁸⁹

In this rapidly changing regional context, the Fourteenth Congress of the RCP was held in Bucharest on 20–24 November 1989. In many respects, the outcome of this congress determined the violent nature of the Romanian revolution. The Romanian communists did not have the courage to force their supreme leader to step down, as the Bulgarian communists did some two weeks before. At the same time, the military and the Securitate had a rather accurate view of the unfolding of events in the communist countries of ECE. Therefore, many were psychologically prepared for similar events to take place in Romania. For instance, on 17 December 1989, one day after the unrest sparked in the city of Timișoara, the commander in chief of the Timiș county Militia, colonel Ion Deheleanu, greeted the group of high-ranking officers coming from Bucharest to assess the situation with the words: "Could the whole General Inspectorate of the Militia come.... Everything is finished, the accounts are settled."⁹⁰ Because numerous high-ranking party activists, secret police officers and army commanders possessed reliable information about the

situation in ECE, they remained passive during the crucial days of 21–22 December 1989.

Beside external conjunctural factors, the Romanian communist regime was also vulnerable in terms of domestic conjuncture. Although the internal conjunctural factors contributed to a lesser extent to the final demise of the regime, they should not be neglected. Some factors were indeed of minor importance. For instance, during the period 16–22 December 1989 the weather was exceptionally mild both in Timișoara and Bucharest. A revolutionary from Timișoara recalls: “From the time the events started to unfold, the weather was on our side. The sky was clear and it was unusually warm for the month of December.”⁹¹ This is not to say that had the weather been bad, the 1989 revolution would have not taken place. Nevertheless, the springlike weather played a role in creating an almost surreal atmosphere that contributed to the appearance of the short-lived sense of solidarity by a majority of the population during those days of December 1989.

A more significant internal conjunctural factor was the coming of age of the 1967–69 baby boom resulted from the policy of forced natality launched by Ceaușescu after his coming to power. On 1 October 1966, the Romanian Council of State issued Decree 770, which practically banned abortion. The new legislation led to a sudden increase in population over the period 1967–69. In 1967, for instance, the number of births was nearly double in comparison with the preceding year: while before the banning of abortion there were 250,000 births per year in Romania, in 1967 the number of births rose to 500,000.⁹² The political socialization of this generation is particularly relevant in relation to the upheaval of 1989.⁹³ The 1967–69 generation was in its majority urbanized. Some named it the “first generation born in blocks of flats.” Furthermore, this generation was raised in a climate of relative stability and modest economic improvements during the late 1960s and early 1970s, and therefore went through a different process

of political socialization and had different expectations than the generation of their parents. At the same time, the 1967–69 generation took advantage of the technological improvements brought about by communism, such as radio and television, and was therefore much more exposed to the international media. The figures concerning the victims of the revolution show that the younger generation joined immediately the protest, and was extremely active during the December 1989 events. By looking at the age groups to which the victims of revolution belong one can get an overall image regarding the involvement of the younger generation in the Romanian revolution of 1989. For instance, according to the calculations of the Ministry of Internal Affairs concerning the period 17–21 December 1989, the total number of victims of the revolution in Timișoara amounts to 376. Of them, 73 persons were killed and 303 injured. In terms of age groups, the victims can be arranged into the following categories: (1) up to 15 years of age: 8; (2) between 15 and 25 years of age: 133; (3) between 25 and 35 years: 120; (4) between 35 and 45 years: 81; (5) over 45 years: 34. As one can easily see, the most active persons in the 1989 revolution were those aged between 15–25 years (133 victims) and 25–35 years (120 victims).⁹⁴ In short, these figures suggest that the 1967–69 generation and those younger represented the largest group among those who participated in the street demonstrations of 1989.

Nation-Specific Factors

The Romanian revolution of 1989 broke out and ensued violently, and therefore differed fundamentally from the rest of the 1989 revolutions in ECE. In order to explain the peculiarities of the Romanian case, this chapter addresses the attitudinal and behavioral patterns that characterized the relationship between regime and

society, which emerged from the successive transformations of the Stalinist model imposed on Romanian society in the immediate aftermath of World War II. According to this author, one can identify five main periods that characterize the relationship between the communist regime and Romanian society in general over the period 1945–89: (1) “revolution from above,” 1945–56; (2) “community-building,” 1956–64; (3) transition from “community-building” to nation-building, 1964–68; (4) fully fledged nation-building, 1968–85; and (5) disenchantment and de-legitimation, 1985–89.⁹⁵ Over these five periods, two processes] interacted permanently. On the one hand, the regime applied consistent policies meant to tame and subsequently co-opt the population. On the other hand, the population reacted to these policies in various ways ranging from collaboration to open conflict with the regime. The attitudinal and behavioral patterns that resulted from the complex interaction of these processes ultimately determined the nature of the Romanian revolution of 1989.

Regime Political Culture

In the aftermath of World War I, Romania witnessed a certain degree of unrest stirred by Bolshevik propaganda, but the authorities avoided the outbreak of a revolutionary situation. Yet, the socialist movement experienced a revival in the interwar period. The issue of affiliation to the Comintern sparked a heated internal debate, which ultimately led to a major schism within the socialist movement after the congress of 8–13 May 1921. A radical faction, the “maximalists,” who opted for affiliation to the Comintern, founded the Communist Party of Romania (RCP) and declared the mentioned congress as their First Congress. Another four congresses followed: on 3–4 October 1922 (the Second Congress); August 1924 (the Third Congress, held in Vienna); 28 June–7 July

1928 (the Fourth Congress, held in Kharkov); and 3–24 December 1931 (the Fifth Congress, held near Moscow).⁹⁶ Due to its total subservience to the Kremlin, the RCP remained a marginal political party over the entire interwar period. The acceptance of the Cominternist theses that Romania was an “imperialistic state,” created “by occupation of foreign territories,” which “exploited the oppressed peoples” contributed decisively to the poor perception of the party as working against the idea of Greater Romania.

In August 1944, the core group of communist militants in Romania numbered some 900–1,000 members. This group took power with the backing of the Red Army and had no other chance of staying in power than to be completely subservient to Stalin and emulate the Soviet model. The party grew from the initial figure mentioned above (some 900–1,000 members in 1944) to around 257,000 in October 1945 and to over 1,000,000 in February 1948. The single party of the working class in Romania, the Romanian Workers Party (RWP), was born the same month of February 1948 after the unification of the Romanian Communist Party with the Romanian Social Democratic Party.⁹⁷ Subsequently, the newly established party underwent a “verification campaign,” followed by purges meant to exclude “unsound elements” from the party ranks. The purges of 1948 affected some 192,000 party members, while admission of new members was suspended until 1952. Consequently, in December 1955 the RWP numbered approximately 539,000 members.⁹⁸ Gheorghiu-Dej’s “revolution from above” was accompanied by random terror directed against the regime’s real or imagined enemies: members of the interwar political establishment, clergymen belonging to different religious denominations, ordinary citizens who died during the deportation to the Bărăgan Plain (1951–56), as well as citizens of German ethnic origin who died during deportation for “reconstruction work” in the USSR (1945–50).⁹⁹

Two major features characterized the political culture of Romanian communism: (1) party monolithism, and (2) party emancipation. Preserving the unity of the party was a central element of the political culture of both the Gheorghiu-Dej and Ceaușescu regimes. Factions within the party had to be avoided at all costs. In his speech delivered on the occasion of the celebration of 30 years since the creation of the communist party, Gheorghiu-Dej stated that the most precious asset of the party was its unity.¹⁰⁰ Emancipation was an equally powerful myth, born of the interwar years when the party had unabatedly followed the orders coming from Kremlin. Moreover, the non-Romanian leadership of the party, mostly imposed from Moscow, deeply frustrated the ethnic Romanian members. In fact, during the period 1922–44, only one general secretary was of Romanian origin, Gheorghe Cristescu (1922–24), while all the others were not: Elek Köblös (1924–28); Vitali Holostenko (1928–31); Aleksandr Danieluk Stefanski (1931–34); Boris Ștefanov (1934–40); and Ștefan Foriș (1940–44).¹⁰¹ The period of common socialization in prisons during the interwar and wartime years was crucial in shaping the political culture of the postwar party elite. Sociologist Pavel Câmpeanu provided an insightful analysis of the period spent in prison by the group of communist militants who would become prominent nomenklatura members after the communist takeover. According to Câmpeanu, Gheorghiu-Dej became a natural leader of the imprisoned communists due to his charismatic personality doubled by a ruthless determination to achieve “unlimited power.”¹⁰² Throughout his period in power, Gheorghiu-Dej’s immediate political goals were contextually defined and the strategies devised to pursue them were context-dependent.¹⁰³ Such a political style enabled Gheorghiu-Dej to maintain his personal power in spite of the major challenges he faced during the year 1956.¹⁰⁴

By the end of 1955, Gheorghiu-Dej was already the undisputed leader of the RWP. By that time, his major rivals from within the

party, Ștefan Foriș, Lucrețiu Pătrășcanu and Ana Pauker, had been either assassinated or purged. Nonetheless, one cannot predict the unpredictable. Gheorghiu-Dej and his men could not foresee the events that would deeply affect world communism during the year 1956, i.e., Khrushchev’s condemnation of Stalin’s personality cult and the Hungarian revolution of 23 October–4 November. This time, Gheorghiu-Dej’s unlimited personal power was not threatened anymore by domestic factors, but by the very source of RWP’s authority: the Kremlin. Such a new context called for a rapid adoption of a strategy of political survival. Although Khrushchev’s attack on Stalin’s crimes against party members came as a shock for Gheorghiu-Dej, he managed to buy time in order to avoid a genuine de-Stalinization and devise a strategy that had at its core a cautious return to autochthonous values. Contingency also played a major role in saving his political career: the sparking of the Hungarian Revolution of 1956 contributed decisively to Gheorghiu-Dej’s political survival. As noted, the Romanian communist elite condemned the revolutionary events in the neighboring country at once and succeeded in convincing the Soviets of their profound loyalty.

The strategy of political survival adopted by Gheorghiu-Dej and his men was not centered from the very beginning on a skillful instrumentalization of nationalism. In fact, there is little evidence that the Romanian communist elite mastered the main elements of traditional Romanian nationalism. Nonetheless, once Khrushchev had inaugurated the de-Stalinization campaign, the RWP leadership had to look elsewhere for legitimacy and thus were compelled to initiate a process of “selective community-building,” i.e., to strive to create new political meanings, which would redefine the relationship between the party and society on a basis shared by both the ruling elite and the population.¹⁰⁵ It was not a dormant sense of national identity that was awakened in the political conjuncture of the year 1956. On the contrary, the

context of 1956 imposed the devising of a new political strategy and that strategy was designed as a selective expansion to most, but by no means all, segments of Romanian society of the within-the-group-from-prisons worldview. The selective nature of the community-building process launched in the aftermath of the 1956 events needs to be stressed once more. Not all the segments of Romanian society were allowed to take part in the process. Up to the year 1964, numerous Romanian citizens were imprisoned on political grounds while their offspring were denied basic civil rights.¹⁰⁶ They were considered “enemies of the people” and the community building process was not aimed at them. At the same time, it took a rather long time until the party mastered the language of nationalism and fully understood the importance of national ideology. The fact that in 1958 the regime launched a second wave of repression meant to tame further the population, during which the collectivization process was also completed (1962), supports the argument that the party was not sure of the effects the emerging nationalistic rhetoric would have on the population.¹⁰⁷

As previously mentioned, the document that epitomizes Gheorghiu-Dej’s policy of independence from the Soviet Union was the so-called Declaration of April 1964, one of the RWP’s most important official documents. Simply put, this declaration might be considered the credo of the monolithic and emancipated RWP. After claiming the right of each and every communist party to decide upon its own strategy of building “socialism,” the RWP elite took the major step towards a decisive shift from selective community building to nation-building: the liberation of political prisoners. The general amnesty led to the liberation of the overwhelming majority of political convicts by the end of August 1964.¹⁰⁸ Like his predecessor, Ceaușescu was fully convinced that independence and industrialization were the fundamental elements of Romania’s strategy of building communism. In terms of foreign

policy and relations with Soviet bloc countries, Ceaușescu followed unabatedly the line set forth by the Declaration of April 1964. Once in power, Ceaușescu also pursued Gheorghiu-Dej’s policies regarding the preservation of party monolithism. Thus, the new party statute, adopted by the congress of 19–24 July 1965, the first after the change of leadership, stipulates: “The party does not admit the existence of factions within its ranks. Any factional activity represents a crime against the party and is incompatible with the quality of party member.”¹⁰⁹ At the same time, this congress decided to change the name of the party from the Romanian Workers Party (RWP) into the Romanian Communist Party (RCP). Consequently, this congress became the Ninth Congress of the RCP.

However, Ceaușescu had first to be recognized as the undisputed leader of the RCP. In order to achieve this goal, he emulated the Khrushchevite platform, which Jowitt concisely defined as “Don’t kill the cadres.” Accordingly, Ceaușescu condemned the crimes committed by his predecessor against party members in order to consolidate his power.¹¹⁰ After an initial period of “collective leadership,” Ceaușescu staged a plenum of the CC of the RCP, which was held on 22–25 April 1968.¹¹¹ The plenum issued a document of prime importance regarding the wrongdoings of the Gheorghiu-Dej regime, the “Resolution of the CC of the RCP regarding the rehabilitation of a number of party activists.” This official document represents, in fact, the essence of Romania’s belated and short-lived de-Stalinization, which lasted from April 1968 to July 1971. The Resolution of April 1968 comprised six provisions, which were in fact six indictments of Gheorghiu-Dej’s policies concerning the party apparatus.¹¹² More importantly, the plenum of April 1968 had a major impact on the party and the Securitate, because it indicated that the period of “collective leadership” was coming to an end and that Ceaușescu was about to become the undisputed leader of the party.

At the same time, regime perceptions from below had improved gradually during the period March 1965–August 1968, due to Ceaușescu's foreign policy of independence from Moscow and opening towards the West, as well as due to his domestic policies of relative economic and ideological relaxation. The slight improvement of the standard of living of the population found an echo in the hearts and minds of a majority of Romania's population. With regard to the relationship between the RCP and Romanian society, the year 1968 is of major significance. Over the period 15–17 August 1968, the Soviet leadership deliberated on how to react to the situation in Czechoslovakia. The decision to intervene militarily was eventually made on 17 August.¹¹³ Consequently, on the night of 20 to 21 August, WTO troops under Soviet command invaded Czechoslovakia and put an end to the Prague Spring. On 21 August 1968, from the balcony of the building of CC of the RCP, Ceaușescu addressed the crowds gathered in front of the building. His highly patriotic speech had also strong anti-Soviet accents, which created a particular state of mind among the population. For instance, Ceaușescu stated: "There can be no excuse, and there can be no reason to accept, even for a single moment, the idea of a military intervention in the domestic affairs of a fraternal socialist state."¹¹⁴ Such statement was perceived by Romanians (and others in the Soviet bloc) as a bold challenge of the Soviet leadership. Thus, large segments of the population supported Ceaușescu without hesitation after his famous "balcony speech" of August 1968. The effect of this speech on Romania's population at large was enormous, for it represented the "proof" of Ceaușescu's charismatic qualifications.¹¹⁵

This author agrees with David Beetham, who argues that the use of the Weberian concept of "charismatic authority" is problematic in the sense that it "assigns far too exclusive an importance to the individual, and leads to fruitless, because unresolvable, disputes about whether particular leaders possess the

indefinable quality of 'charisma' or not."¹¹⁶ In order to understand the mechanism that provided the Ceaușescu regime with unprecedented mobilizing capacity one should consider not only his personality and leadership style, but also the particular circumstances in which popular mobilization occurred. In this respect, Ceaușescu benefited largely from the line inaugurated by Gheorghiu-Dej. Simple themes, such as the struggle for independence and the return to traditional values, found an echo in the minds and hearts of a majority of the Romanian population. In 1968, the country seemed to be moving in the right direction, and many felt that the RCP leadership was truly concerned with improving the general situation of the population. Such a widespread positive perception of the regime permitted the RCP to achieve a "limited legitimation through consent."¹¹⁷

The societal response to Ceaușescu's speech of 21 August 1968 made clear that nationalism was a most powerful political principle, able to confer legitimacy on RCP rule in Romania. As John Breuilly points out: "Nationalism is, above and beyond all else, about politics and ... politics is about power. Power, in the modern world, is principally about control of the state."¹¹⁸ From 1968 onwards, the RCP propaganda put a stronger emphasis on the ancestors' struggle for independence and on their heroic deeds. Two megaproductions, *Columna* (The Column), 1968, directed by Mircea Drăgan, and *Mihai Viteazul* (Michael the Brave), 1970, directed by Sergiu Nicolaescu, translated into cinematic narratives the most cherished historical myths of the Romanians. While the former speaks of ancient roots and continuity on the present day territory, the latter refers to the struggle for unity and independence.¹¹⁹ As Schöpflin notes: "Mythic and symbolic discourses can ... be employed to assert legitimacy and strengthen authority. They mobilize emotions and enthusiasm. They are a primary means by which people make sense of the political process, which is understood in a symbolic form."¹²⁰

Ceaușescu aimed at a radical reinforcement of ethnic ties among the Romanian majority, a stance made clear by the launch of the so-called Theses of July 1971. The “theses” consisted in a brief document structured on seventeen points, issued first on 6 July 1971. An embodiment of Ceaușescu’s rigid attitude towards education and cultural production, these points were reiterated three days later, at a meeting of party officials involved in propaganda. In essence, Ceaușescu’s theses represented a radical attack against cosmopolitan and “decadent,” pro-Western attitudes in Romanian culture and a return to cultural autochthonism.¹²¹ After the launch of the 1971 theses, the regime began to place a stronger emphasis on the importance of history writing in building the “socialist nation,” and the next step was to provide party guidelines for the writing of the official version of national history. Three years later, in 1974, the party issued the founding document of Romanian national-communism: the Romanian Communist Party Program.¹²² This official document opened with a 38-page concise history of Romania, based on the four historical myths already presented: (1) the ancient roots of the Romanian people; (2) the continuity of the Romanians on their present day territory from ancient times until the present; (3) the unity of the Romanian people throughout its history; and (4) the Romanians’ continuous struggle for independence. This particular vision of national history formed the basis of the compulsory history textbooks utilized in schools.

At the power elite level, the rule of Ceaușescu was consolidated rapidly in the aftermath of the Tenth Congress of the RCP, held on 6–12 August 1969. Throughout the next decade, nobody challenged the supreme leader from within the party ranks. At the same time, Ceaușescu did not have to use purges anymore to rule. Instead, he made use of the so-called rotation of cadres, the periodical removal from office of all nomenklatura members, and

relied increasingly on relatives. However, a party veteran dared to raise his voice against Ceaușescu’s rule and the personality cult developed around him in front of the Twelfth Party Congress, which was held on 19–23 November 1979. An 84 year-old party veteran and one of the founders of the RCP, Constantin Pârvulescu affirmed in front of the congress that nothing serious had been discussed by the delegates at the event. At the same time, he stated that he would vote against the re-election of Ceaușescu as secretary general of the RCP. Pârvulescu did not receive any support from nomenklatura members or other officials in the audience and was evacuated immediately from the congress hall.¹²³ After this event, no other party official dared to criticize the rule of Ceaușescu in a similar manner until the late 1980s.

This significant level of cohesion of the ruling elite was maintained until 1989 due to Ceaușescu’s ability to assert independence from Moscow. When a Romanian high-ranking party official exclaimed in a discussion with a foreign diplomat: “Independence is our legitimacy!” he really meant it.¹²⁴ However, the nationalistic hatred for the Soviets acted in favor of the regime until the mid-1980s. At mass level, one of the lessons taught by the national history was that nothing good came from the East, and the regime was prepared to nurture and exploit Romanians’ Russophobia. However, there was something that the regime could not foresee: the coming to power in Moscow of a younger leader with a broader vision of politics and a different leadership style. After 1985, in the conditions of the structural economic and moral crisis of Romanian communism, the launch of Gorbachev’s domestic reforms led to the emergence of a completely different image of the Soviet Union and its leadership. The Romanians ceased to perceive the Soviet Union as a real threat to Romania’s sovereignty and began to look towards Moscow in the hope that it would set them free from the domestic tyranny of the Ceaușescu clan. “Gorbimania” started to spread among Romania’s population,

exasperated by the economic crisis and personality cult of the “Genius of the Carpathians.” When Gorbachev paid an official visit to Romania, between 25 and 27 May 1987, many Romanians hoped that he would persuade Ceaușescu to introduce some economic reforms. Moreover, people were eager to find out more about Gorbachev’s reforms. Pamphlets and brochures published in Romanian in the Soviet Union by the Novosti Press Agency circulated, especially in Bucharest, as a sort of dissident writings. During the period 1988–89 people avidly read Soviet brochures whose titles contained subversive words and phrases such as: “restructuring,” “renewal,” “innovative” and “a new vision.”¹²⁵ In terms of nationalist propaganda, therefore, the key argument of the RCP’s legitimating discourse, i.e., independence from Moscow, vanished after the inception of Gorbachev’s reforms. Thus, the period 1985–89 can be defined as one of disenchantment with, and de-legitimation of, RCP rule in Romania.

Following Pârvulescu’s open criticism of Ceaușescu in 1979, the next notable protest from within the establishment occurred only in 1989. On 14 March 1989, an open letter signed by six former high-ranking officials of the party, Gheorghe Apostol, Alexandru Bârlădeanu, Silviu Brucan, Corneliu Mănescu, Constantin Pârvulescu and Grigore Răceanu, was broadcast by RFE. The letter was addressed to Ceaușescu and began with an indictment of his mistaken policies. The six former high-ranking party officials concluded their letter with three demands addressed directly to Ceaușescu: (1) to declare in categorical and unequivocal terms that he had renounced the plan of rural systematization; (2) to reestablish constitutional guarantees concerning citizens’ rights, which would indicate that Romania had adhered to the decisions of the Vienna Conference concerning human rights; and (3) to stop the export of foodstuffs which was threatening the very biological existence of the nation.¹²⁶ It was for the first time in communist Romania that former top party officials were publicly

criticizing Ceaușescu’s policies. All the signatories of the letter had been part of Gheorghiu-Dej’s team and some of them had been part of the confident Romanian communist elite that had emancipated itself from Moscow in the late 1950s and early 1960s. As members of the elite that had learned high politics by doing it, the six signatories had a broader view of world politics than Ceaușescu and his inner circle of power. This letter marked the first major split at the level of the RCP elite. It signaled that the monolithism of the RCP was broken, and a faction of the nomenklatura was openly protesting against Ceaușescu’s lead. At the same time, the signatories of the letter were already retired and their links with the party were practically severed. Their letter came too late and therefore had an insignificant impact on the RCP’s domestic policies. In other words, the “mortal sin” of factionalism was committed too late to avoid a bloody revolution in 1989.

As far as the legitimating power of nationalism was concerned, the regime was left with a sole target: the Hungarian minority in Romania. Thus, on 20 December 1989 Ceaușescu affirmed that the revolt in Timișoara, which sparked the Romanian revolution, was the result of the activity of “hooligan elements, working together with reactionary, imperialistic, irredentist, chauvinistic circles ... aiming at the territorial dismemberment of Romania.”¹²⁷ To be sure, Ceaușescu was hinting, among other targets, at neighboring Hungary and the Soviet Union. However, the new image of the Soviet Union among Romania’s population undermined the propagandistic efforts of the regime. While independence from Moscow ceased to be a major source of legitimacy for the communist regime in Romania, the inner circle of power around the Ceaușescu couple displayed a high level of cohesion, the highest among the six countries that compose the 1989 sequence of collapse, up to the very end of the regime. This explains why Romania occupies the last position in the sequence.

Political Cultures of Resistance

Romania was a communist country where the acts of defying the regime were considerably fewer in number and less organized than in other countries in the Soviet bloc. However, one can identify three forms of contestation of the communist regime in Romania prior to the bloody revolution of 1989: (1) armed resistance in the Carpathian Mountains, 1948–64; (2) intellectual dissent, 1977–89; and (3) impulsive expression of discontent by the working class, 1977–89, with increasingly structured political goals over the period 1981–89. The so-called “resistance in the mountains” developed after 23 August 1944, when the Romanian army switched sides in World War II, and grew into an anti-communist phenomenon after 6 March 1945, when the communist-dominated Petru Groza cabinet came to power. After the first wave of collectivization was launched in March 1949, numerous peasants also sought refuge in the mountains.¹²⁸ These groups of armed resistance came rather spontaneously into being and lacked resources. They had a very diverse membership, but all were determined to fight against the newly established regime in the hope that a confrontation between the British and Americans and the Soviets was imminent.¹²⁹ The “resistance in the mountains” did not evolve into a movement coordinated at a national scale.¹³⁰ However, the number of those hiding in the mountains grew after the communist takeover and reached a peak in the early 1950s. After the defeat of the Hungarian revolution, this form of resistance lost any rationale, so the communist regime succeeded in completely repressing it in the early 1960s. It is generally accepted that the last fighter in the mountains was killed by the Securitate forces in the Banat Mountains in 1962.¹³¹ In spite of its relative longevity, this type of anti-communist resistance never represented a real threat to the regime.

As for Romanian intellectual dissent, this form of protest developed gradually beginning in 1977, but remained until the

late 1980s a form of individual act of defiance. Speaking about Romanian dissidence in the late 1970s, a Western specialist in East European affairs affirmed in the early 1980s that: “Romanian dissent lives in Paris and his name is Paul Goma.”¹³² The argument put forward in this section is that although dissidence developed tortuously in communist Romania and took a more articulate form only in the late 1980s, critical intellectuals, who spoke more or less openly against Ceaușescu’s policies, played a significant role in transforming the anti-Ceaușescu character of the popular revolt into an anticommunist revolution. Their discourses, which had been inspired by those of dissidents in Poland, Czechoslovakia or Hungary, turned the expressive actions of a majority of the population, i.e., the anti-Ceaușescu protests, into purposive actions, i.e., a fundamental regime change.

Until writer Paul Goma launched in 1977 the movement for human rights that now bears his name, dissidence was almost non-existent in communist Romania. One of the reasons for such a situation was the relative success of Gheorghiu-Dej’s post-1956 policy based on industrialization and independence. As previously mentioned, Ceaușescu only adapted the strategy of his predecessor to the post-1968 context, and focused on nation-building and modernization. After 1968, the regime was also able to instrumentalize nationalism, which allowed the creation of a relatively enduring focus of identification with the regime and hampered to a certain extent the development of intellectual dissidence in communist Romania. As Cristina Petrescu suggests, after August 1968 a major part of the population perceived Ceaușescu as a most prominent “dissident” because of his alleged anti-Soviet stance.¹³³ The movement for human rights initiated by Goma was the Romanian response to the Czechoslovak Charter 77 and was inaugurated in January 1977 by a letter of solidarity sent by Goma to the Czech writer Pavel Kohout. In addition, Goma wrote an appeal to the 1977 Helsinki follow-up conference, which was held

in Belgrade. This appeal, which became the fundamental document of the movement, demanded that the Ceaușescu regime comply with the provisions of the 1975 Helsinki Final Act concerning the observance of human rights. However, apart from writer Ion Negoieșcu and psychiatrist Ion Vianu, no other prominent intellectual supported Goma's actions. Moreover, among the approximately 200 individuals who eventually signed the appeal, a majority actually just wanted to obtain a passport, the so-called "Goma passport," in order to emigrate to the West. After trying in vain to persuade Goma to renounce his radical stance, the authorities imprisoned him on 1 April 1977. After the news of his arrest reached the West, an international campaign, in which the Romanian desk of RFE played a major role, was immediately launched. Eventually, the communist authorities released Goma from prison on 6 May 1977. At that moment, the movement for human rights had been practically dissolved by the secret police. Embittered by the lack of support on the part of his fellow writers, Goma left Romania definitively in November 1977, together with his wife and son, and settled in Paris.¹³⁴

A cross-class alliance did not emerge in Romania until December 1989, when the overwhelming majority of the population managed to unite in its hatred against the Ceaușescu regime. Until the 1987 Brașov revolt, working-class protests did not receive support on the part of the intelligentsia. A good opportunity to link intellectual dissidence with working-class unrest was lost in 1977. The two major protests that occurred in 1977 – the dissident movement led by Goma (January–April) and the strike organized by miners in the Jiu Valley basin (August) – did not evolve into a cross-class alliance. There was also a daring attempt at creating a free trade union in Romania as early as 1979, i.e., before the creation of the Polish Solidarity. Yet, the Free Trade Union of the Working People in Romania (*Sindicatul Liber al Oamenilor Muncii din România*–SLOMR) existed practically from

January to June 1979. Its leaders, Ionel Cană, Gheorghe Brașoveanu and Nicolae Dascălu, were imprisoned immediately after RFE broadcast the founding declaration of the SLOMR on 4 March 1979. Although the SLOMR never became a movement, it represented nonetheless a daring and timely initiative that unfortunately did not receive adequate support on the part of workers or the intelligentsia.¹³⁵

Among Romania's most active, yet isolated dissidents was Doina Cornea, a lecturer in French literature at the University of Cluj. In August 1982, RFE broadcast her first critical letter on the crisis of the educational system in Romania. Until the collapse of communism, Cornea represented one of the most powerful dissident voices in communist Romania, who authored numerous open letters and managed even to get collective support in some cases, in particular for the protest against Ceaușescu's program of rural systematization.¹³⁶ A promising poet from Bucharest, Dorin Tudoran, decided also in 1982 to make public his criticism towards the establishment. Until 1985, when he emigrated, Tudoran radicalized his position and evolved from comments strictly limited to the abuses concerning literary milieus to denunciation of the communist system itself.¹³⁷ Another significant act of opposition belonged to Radu Filipescu, a young engineer from Bucharest. During the period January–May 1983, he produced and disseminated in the capital city some thousands anti-Ceaușescu manifestos. Arrested accidentally on 7 May, Filipescu was sentenced on 12 September 1983 to ten years in prison for "propaganda against the socialist order." He was eventually released from prison in 1986 after a sustained international campaign organized by RFE and Amnesty International.¹³⁸ Towards the end of 1987, an intellectual from the city of Iași, writer Dan Petrescu, gave an interview to the French reporter Jean Stern (pen name Gilles Schiller). On 27 January 1988, the French newspaper *Libération* published the interview under the title "Ceaușescu nu

e singurul vinovat” (Ceașescu is not the only one to be blamed), which underlined Petrescu’s main message: all those who supported Ceașescu’s rule by their silent obedience were responsible for Romania’s disaster. In his second essay, “Mic studiu despre anatomia răului” (Short study on the anatomy of evil), published in *Libération* on 15 February 1988 and subsequently broadcast by RFE, he stated clearly that it was the communist system to be blamed for Romania’s disastrous situation and not solely the person of Ceașescu.¹³⁹ Although the cases discussed above do not exhaust the list of regime’s open critics, one should note that all represented isolated cases of dissent.

A major turn occurred when Bucharest intellectuals eventually joined the anti-Ceașescu opposition. On 17 March 1989, the same French newspaper *Libération* published an interview with poet Mircea Dinescu, whose criticism of the system went beyond the current professional issues related to the literary field and addressed directly the disastrous way in which Ceașescu ruled.¹⁴⁰ Dinescu praised Gorbachev’s reforms by saying that the Soviet leader was perceived in Romania as the “Messiah of socialism with human face.”¹⁴¹ Because of his public stance, Dinescu was placed under house arrest. A number of seven intellectuals, subsequently joined by another two, wrote a letter of solidarity with Dinescu.¹⁴² Their letter, written on 20 March 1989 and addressed to the head of the Writers’ Union, represented a significant gesture of solidarity in the Romanian context.

The situation changed significantly from the spring of 1989 onwards. Six former communist officials wrote a highly critical open letter to Ceașescu, as noted above. Nine prominent intellectuals publicly expressed their solidarity with Dinescu. Slowly, group protests were replacing the isolated dissident acts by courageous individuals. In November 1989, dissident Dan Petrescu initiated a campaign of collecting signatures against the reelection of Ceașescu at the Fourteenth Congress of the RCP.

In addition, the story of the “letter of the eighteen” is telling of the efforts and vacillations of the intellectuals who felt that they should do something to protest against communist rule. The letter was transmitted abroad only in mid-December 1989, on the brink of the revolution.¹⁴³ Nevertheless, the very fact that intellectuals eventually managed to become solidary in their protest indicates that a timid but shared feeling of solidarity was gradually replacing the “egoism of small groups.” Yet, it was too late for a dissident movement to take shape and give birth to a political opposition able to fill the power vacuum in the afternoon of 22 December 1989. What some intellectuals managed to do that day was to speak to the large crowds gathered in the Palace Square in downtown Bucharest and argue forcefully and convincingly that the monopoly of the RCP was over.¹⁴⁴ They told the crowds that it was not a matter of an anti-Ceașescu uprising, but of an anti-communist revolution. Although short-lived, that was an important moment of the 1989 Romanian revolution.

Finally, workers did rebel against the communist regime in Romania. The most significant working-class protests occurred in 1977, 1981 and 1987. These protests, however, did not lead to the birth of a Solidarity-like movement. Many arguments have been put forward in order to explain such a situation: the weak working-class traditions in Romania; the rural origins of the overwhelming majority of the workers; or the perpetuation of a traditional mentality in working-class environments, in spite of the policy of extensive industrialization and urbanization carried out by the communist regime. Of the three revolts mentioned above, the strike organized by Jiu Valley miners on 1–3 August 1977 represents the most significant working-class protest carried out under the communist regime in Romania. This protest was sparked by the new legislation (Law 3/1977) concerning pensions. With regard to the mining sector, the law introduced some new provisions, such as: a raise of the retirement age from fifty to fifty-five; an extension

of the miners' workday from six to eight hours; and cancellation or limitation of various categories of sickness benefits and entitlements to disability pension.¹⁴⁵ The strike began on 1 August in the morning, at the Lupeni mine and reached its climax on 3 August.¹⁴⁶ One can summarize the main aspects of the strike as follows: (1) emergence of a strike leadership and the establishment of a strike command post inside the Lupeni mine; (2) organization of the protest in the form of a non-violent, round-the-clock sit-down strike; and (3) request to negotiate the strikers' list of demands solely with the supreme leader of the RCP, face to face.¹⁴⁷ On 2 August 1977, a delegation of high party officials led by Ilie Verdeț was sent to negotiate with the miners.¹⁴⁸ The strikers, however, refused to discuss with anyone else apart from Ceaușescu, who had thus to come to Lupeni on 3 August. In front of a determined, but not violent crowd, he practically agreed to the miners' demands, which resulted in the termination of the strike. Ceaușescu did not use force to suppress the strike. Repression followed only gradually, during the winter of 1977–78. In spite of rumors, the Securitate did not assassinate the ringleaders. They were forcefully moved to other regions, where they remained under strict surveillance by the secret police. In short, the 1977 Jiu Valley strike was the best conducted working-class protest in communist Romania, but its goals were mainly social, and thus this protest did not turn into an anti-regime uprising.

The next significant working-class protest occurred in 1981 in another major mining area of the country, the Motru basin in Gorj county. The Motru uprising occurred because of the food rationing measures introduced by Decree 313 of 17 October 1981.¹⁴⁹ Consequently, bread was rationed at 400 grams per person, in the conditions that bread was the very basic food for miners and their families. The uprising was sparked on 19 October 1981, at the news that each worker was entitled to a daily ration of only 400 grams of bread. The miners preparing to enter the second shift

refused to go to work, and waited for their fellows from the first shift to finish work and join them. After a while, the strikers started shouting slogans such as: "We want bread!" or "Ceaușescu – RCP, our bread, where is it?"¹⁵⁰ In spite of efforts to appease them, the protest turned violent: miners marched to the town of Motru, the administrative center of the area, and stormed official buildings. The violent confrontation between the angry crowds and riot police supported by militia and Securitate agents lasted from 18:00 hours on 19 October to 05:00 hours on the next day, 20 October. Numerous arrests were operated but, in spite of the violence and destruction of "socialist property," only nine workers were sentenced to jail. The most important element of the 1981 Motru uprising is that the rebellious miners shouted "Down with Ceaușescu!" This marked a change of attitude in terms of perceptions from below concerning the secretary general of the RCP.¹⁵¹ While the miners in the Jiu Valley believed that Ceaușescu would solve their demands, those in Motru considered him responsible for the food crisis.

A similar pattern of action by the protesters could be observed in the case of the Brașov workers protest of 15 November 1987, which also turned into a violent anti-Ceaușescu revolt. The protest was sparked by a situation created by outside factors that the workers were not able to influence or control, but which threatened their very existence. More precisely, the protest began with a spontaneous strike at the *Steagul Roșu* (Red Flag) truck plant, in response to the wage cuts imposed by the management for the non-fulfillment of production targets. During the third (night) shift at the plant, workers stopped working at 06:00 hours and around 08:00 hours marched off from the plant in the direction of the city center. A significant number of city-dwellers joined the workers in their protest, which indicated the deep dissatisfaction of the Romanian population with the Ceaușescu regime. In fact, in November 1987, workers and city dwellers in Brașov shouted

together “Down with Ceaușescu!” and thus identified the supreme leader of the RCP as a source of their plight.¹⁵² Around 10:30 hours, the initial crowd joined by workers from the *Tractorul* (Tractor) plant and citizens of Brașov gathered in the front of the local party headquarters. Protesters entered the building, threw out furniture and equipment, and set them on fire outside the building. A similar scenario was repeated at the People’s Council building. Around 12:00 hours, special intervention troops (riot police) entered the central square of Brașov. Around 11: hours, the crowd was dispersed and the protest ceased. During the night of 15 to 16 November 1987, the Securitate arrested many workers of whom eventually 61 received different terms in prison ranging from 6 months to 3 years.¹⁵³

When analyzing the unfolding of the most important working-class protests in Romania, it is necessary to determine which regions presented the highest potential for such protests. Due to lack of resources, the urbanization process under communism was not able to keep pace with the industrialization process. Consequently, the Romanian working class underwent an accelerated transformation that led to the gradual emergence of two major categories of workers, namely genuine workers and commuting villagers or peasant-workers. This categorization differs from the classic one that distinguishes between skilled and unskilled workers. Peasant-workers must not be confused with the agricultural workers employed by state farms. They were industrial workers who commuted daily from their villages to workplaces located in urban areas. This category was less affected by the economic crisis. Actually, the peasant-worker is a good example of a strategy of the individual to survive in the conditions of a severe crisis: a job in industry in the nearby town, and food supplies from the little farm he or she owned in the village. During the period of food shortages, i.e., 1981–89, such people were able to obtain the necessary

foodstuffs for survival more easily and thus their potential for protest was lower. However, their strategy became less successful after the introduction of a strict system of quotas and increased control by the authorities of the output of the small individual farms. For their part, genuine workers severed their roots with countryside, moved to towns where they were employed mostly in industry, and thus were dependent on the salary they received. Until the mid-1970s, the category of genuine workers benefited from the policy of industrialization and urbanization enforced by the communist regime. However, in the conditions of the severe crisis faced by the Ceaușescu regime, this category of workers was increasingly forced to think in terms of biological survival and thus was more prone to engage in open protests. In fact, between 1977 and 1989, the most important protests from below occurred in workplaces where genuine workers constituted a majority: in the Jiu Valley (Hunedoara county) in 1977 and in Brașov (the capital of Brașov county) in 1987. In order to analyze the emergence of protests in such milieus, it is necessary to examine the long distance inter-county migration trends in communist Romania.

To define long distance inter-county migration, a maximum commuting time of two hours per trip has been considered, which means a total of four hours per day.¹⁵⁴ All things considered, it may be argued that in the overwhelming majority of cases the commuting range could not exceed the neighboring counties. To determine the percentage of the population unable to commute daily, and therefore considered long-distance inter-county migrants, the number of people working in a county and born in the neighboring counties has been subtracted from the total number of migrants into the county in question. The analysis considers the absolute figures of internal migration for a number of counties and the city of Bucharest.¹⁵⁵ The counties selected correspond to the 1981 administrative reform, and the selection has been made considering the areas where working-class protests

occurred in both interwar and communist periods. The most relevant counties in this respect are the counties of Hunedoara, Braşov, Cluj, Prahova, Iaşi, Constanţa, and Timişoara. Applied to the case of Hunedoara county, this calculation shows that long-distance migrants represented 25.5 percent of the county's total population. In the case of Braşov county, the same category represented 25.2 percent. These were the counties where working-class protests occurred in 1977 and 1987. Another two counties, Timiş and Constanţa, received a relatively high number of long distance inter-county migrants (23.5 percent of the total population and 21.8 percent, respectively).¹⁵⁶ In these counties, however, the possibility of smuggling consumer goods from the former Yugoslavia and Hungary (in the case of Timiş county) or through the commercial seaport (in the case of Constanţa county) acted to some extent as a "safety valve" and delayed the emergence of social protests in both regions. Nonetheless, the analysis of long-distance migration trends reveals that there were four regions in Romania in which workers' potential for protest was particularly high, namely Constanţa, Braşov, Hunedoara, and Timiş counties. The Romanian revolution was sparked in one of these regions, i.e., Timiş county. Moreover, workers were actively involved in the revolution: out of the total number of 376 victims in Timişoara during the period 17–21 December 1989, as many as 185 were workers.¹⁵⁷ Yet, as the rest of the 1989 revolutions in ECE, the Romanian revolution was not class-based.

The Unfolding of Events, 16–22 December 1989

The Romanian revolution was sparked by an apparently minor incident during the night of 16 to 17 December 1989. This incident, however, initiated the chain of events which led to the outbreak of the popular uprising in Timişoara. On Friday, 15

December, a small group of believers, the majority of Hungarian ethnicity, demonstrated peacefully in support of Reverend László Tökés, a rebellious minister of the Reformed church, who had developed a conflict with both his superiors and the communist authorities because of his activism.¹⁵⁸ On Saturday, 16 December, the demonstration in support of Tökés turned into a demonstration against the Ceauşescu regime, increasingly joined by the population of Timişoara. The first clashes between the protesters and the repressive forces took place between 19:00 and 21:00 hours. Practically, the revolution in Timişoara started after 21:00 hours, when large groups of demonstrators began their march towards the city center. Around 180 people were arrested that night, but protests by the population continued nonetheless the next day, Sunday 17 December. When night fell, the forces of repression opened fire on the demonstrators. Monday, 18 December, a large part of the city was on strike, which continued the next day. On Wednesday, 20 December, a column was formed and the demonstrators started their march towards the city center. At around 12:30 hours, the city was virtually in the hands of the protesters. The same day, Ceauşescu, who had just returned from an official visit to Iran, delivered a televised speech at 19:00 hours in which he announced that a state of emergency had been declared on the territory of Timiş county.¹⁵⁹ In the meantime, protests by the population broke out at around 18:00 hours in the small town of Lugoj, situated some 60 km east of Timişoara.¹⁶⁰

A day later, on 21 December 1989, unrest sparked in major cities throughout Romania as follows: Arad (08:00 hours); Sibiu (09:45 hours);¹⁶¹ Târgu Mureş (11:30 hours); Reşiţa (12:00 hours); Bucharest (12:40 hours); Braşov (13:00 hours);¹⁶² Cluj (15:00 hours); and Alba Iulia (22:30 hours).¹⁶³ In Bucharest, Ceauşescu decided to organize a mass rally on that day at 12:00 hours. In his speech of 21 December 1989, the secretary general of the RCP referred to the necessity of safeguarding national sovereignty and

asked for “force and unity in defending Romania’s independence.”¹⁶⁴ While Ceaușescu was delivering his speech, people from the crowd started to yell. Shouts of “Timișoara!” were also heard.¹⁶⁵ Totally confused, Ceaușescu tried to calm down the people from the balcony of the CC of the RCP, but nobody listened to him. Intended to support Ceaușescu’s rule, the meeting turned into an anti-Ceaușescu demonstration. In reaction, the secretary general convoked the minister of national defense, General Vasile Milea; the head of the Securitate, General Iulian Vlad; and the minister of internal affairs, Tudor Postelnicu.

Meanwhile, gathered in the University Square, demonstrators shouted anti-Ceaușescu slogans such as: “Yesterday in Timișoara, tomorrow in the whole country!” “Down with communism!” “Freedom!” and “Death to the tyrant!” At about 14:00 hours, army units backed by armored vehicles were called to reinforce the already existing units in the area.¹⁶⁶ Around 22:30 hours, the protesters erected a barricade across the Bălcescu Boulevard, which was dismantled with the help of the tanks towards 23:30 hours. A bloody repression started at about 23:00 hours on 21 December and lasted until 03:00 hours on 22 December.¹⁶⁷ All in all, 1,245 individuals were arrested, 462 wounded, and 50 killed in Bucharest on 21 December 1989.¹⁶⁸ On 22 December, beginning with 09:00 hours, large crowds poured into the streets and made their way towards the center of the city. Once arrived in the Palace Square, the crowds assaulted the building of the CC of the RCP. Not a single shot was fired at the protesters. Confused and frightened, the supreme leader of the RCP, who had spent the night inside the CC building accompanied by his wife and ministers Milea, Vlad and Postelnicu, flew by helicopter from the upper platform of the building.¹⁶⁹ The moment when Ceaușescu and his wife, Elena, flew by helicopter from the upper platform of the building of the CC of the RCP was the moment when the communist

regime collapsed – suddenly, completely and unbelievably.¹⁷⁰ It was 22 December 1989 and the time was 12:08 hours.¹⁷¹

Reflections on the Bloody Revolution in Romania

One can formulate three statements regarding the Romanian revolution, as follows: (1) Romania occupies the last position within the 1989 sequence of collapse; (2) the Romanian revolution was the only violent revolution among those of 1989 in ECE; and (3) the bloody revolution in Romania brought second- and third-rank nomenklatura members to power and thus delayed the post-1989 process of democratic consolidation. Turning to the explanatory model presented above, the first factors analyzed have been the structural factors, i.e., economic decline and ideological decay. Although Romania faced the most severe crisis among the six countries that experienced a regime change in 1989, it was the last to exit from communism that year. One can explain such a paradoxical situation by considering the mechanism of rising expectations and setbacks that characterized the Ceaușescu period. Apart from the industrialization process initiated by the regime, a civilizing process did take place under state socialism in Romania, which resulted in some improvements with regard to urbanization and housing, spread of education and sanitation, transportation and increased mobility by the population during the 1960s and 1970s. The severe crisis of the 1980s in many respects paved the way for the bloody revolution of 1989.

Ideological decay or the erosion of ideology was a phenomenon that other communist regimes in ECE experienced after 1956. In Romania, ideology eroded slower due to the successful combination of Marxism-Leninism and nationalism. In August 1968, Ceaușescu publicly condemned the WTO invasion of

Czechoslovakia and thus the RCP gained widespread popular support almost overnight. Only after 1985, when large segments of Romanian society began to look to Moscow in the hope of persuading the Ceaușescu regime to improve their living standards, independence from Moscow, the cornerstone of RCP legitimacy in the post-1968 period, ceased to appeal to a majority of the people. After the launch of Gorbachev's program of reforms, emancipation from the Soviet Union lost its relevance for the Romanian population. Moscow suddenly became synonymous with restructuring and openness, while independent Romania was heading towards disaster. In this sense ideological decay, understood as the demise of Ceaușescu's national-communism as an ersatz ideology, contributed significantly to the collapse of communist rule in Romania.

Contingency played an important role in the final demise of all communist dictatorships in ECE, but in the case of Romania two external conjunctural factors, namely the "Gorbachev factor" and the "snowballing effect," were of paramount importance. In particular, the "Gorbachev factor" influenced events in Romania in a different way, for this country managed to act since the 1960s more independently from the Soviet Union than other Soviet satellites. Thus, the denunciation of the Brezhnev Doctrine had little effect. However, Gorbachev's reforms, which were synonymous with restructuring and openness, contrasted sharply with Ceaușescu's dogmatism. Thus, these reforms gradually delegitimized the RCP's policy of emancipation from the Soviet Union and deprived the Romanian communist regime of popular support. Internal conjunctural factors contributed to a lesser extent to the breakdown of the Ceaușescu regime. Nonetheless, a significant internal conjunctural factor was the coming of age of the 1967–69 generation that originated in the policy of forced natality launched by Ceaușescu.

Nation-specific factors are responsible for the position each country occupied within the sequence of collapse as well as for the violent or non-violent nature of the 1989 revolutions in the respective countries. Monolithism of the party and emancipation from Moscow, as key features of regime political culture, determined to a great extent the violent nature of the Romanian revolution. The only notable protest within the nomenklatura occurred in March 1989, when an open letter signed by six former high-ranking officials of the party was broadcast by RFE. It was the first time in communist Romania that former top party officials were publicly criticizing Ceaușescu's policies. However, the signatories of this letter were already marginalized members of the nomenklatura, and thus their message had an insignificant impact on the RCP's domestic policies. After the coming to power of Gorbachev in 1985, Ceaușescu's policy of independence from Moscow ceased to be a major source of legitimacy for the Romanian communist regime. At the same time, in reaction to the threat posed by Gorbachev's reforms, the inner circle of power around the Ceaușescu couple remained united. The power elite in Bucharest displayed a high level of cohesion, the highest among the six countries that compose the 1989 sequence of collapse, up to the very end of the regime. This explains in many respects why Romania occupies the last place in the sequence.

As for the political cultures of resistance, a key issue refers to the working-class revolts and the process of establishing a cross-class alliance against the communist regime. Between 1977 and 1989, the most important protests from below occurred in the Jiu Valley (Hunedoara county) in 1977 and in Brașov (the capital of Brașov county) in 1987. These revolts occurred in two of the four highly industrialized urban areas, which included also the counties of Constanța and Timiș. In these areas, the number of workers coming from other regions was particularly high. When the structural crisis deepened, it primarily affected such workers, who

suffered from food shortages, strict rationing, and non-payment of wages. It was also in one of these areas, i.e. the city of Timișoara, the capital of Timiș county, that the Romanian revolution of 1989 was sparked. Apart from working-class unrest, group protests developed only slowly and replaced the isolated dissident acts of courageous individuals towards the end of the 1980s. Thus, there was no dissident movement which could give birth to a political opposition able to fill the power vacuum in the afternoon of 22 December 1989. Instead, the better-organized lower-rank nomenklatura stepped in. Nevertheless, some critical intellectuals, dissidents included, addressed the revolutionaries in downtown Bucharest and argued convincingly that the monopoly of the RCP was over. Although short-lived, that was an important moment of the Romanian Revolution of 1989. Thus, dissidents and critical intellectuals contributed to the radicalization of the popular uprising, which ultimately led not to reform communism, but to political pluralism.

CONCLUSION

The Three Key Questions Answered

This book addresses the 1989 events in East-Central Europe (ECE), which provoked the breakdown of the communist dictatorships in Poland, Hungary, East Germany, Czechoslovakia, Bulgaria and Romania. Three peculiar features of the 1989 events must be taken into consideration: they were non-utopian; they were not carried out in the name of a particular class; and, with the conspicuous exception of Romania, they were non-violent. Considering these specific aspects, this author has argued that the 1989 events in ECE can be termed “postmodern revolutions.” The present analysis of the 1989 phenomenon has answered three key questions concerning its inception, unfolding and outcome, namely:

- (1) Why did those revolutionary events occur precisely in 1989?
- (2) Why did the communist regimes in ECE collapse in that particular order? and
- (3) Why were the 1989 events in ECE, with the exception of Romania, not violent?

The three key questions presented above refer in fact to the timing, sequence and nature of the 1989 revolutions. In order to provide a convincing answer to these questions, this author has put forward an explanatory model of the 1989 events and has applied it systematically to all six cases under discussion. The main assumption behind this model-building approach is that the collapse of communist rule in ECE was provoked by a complex interplay of structural, conjunctural and nation-specific factors, which ultimately determined the timing, sequence and nature of those events.

The revolutions of 1989 differed from the classic revolutions in the sense that an immediate potential for open and fatal violence did exist, but violence was eventually avoided, with the exception of Romania. The present analysis has considered three main issues when devising a working definition of a revolution, applicable to all the revolutions of 1989: (1) mass mobilization and protest were an important precondition; (2) violence was the exception and not the norm; and (3) the transnational dimension was essential. Several definitions of a revolution have been considered in order to coin the definition of a revolution employed by the present work with a view to providing a causal explanation for the breakdown of state socialism in ECE. From these definitions, and taking into account the importance of the international context in shaping the 1989 revolutionary process, the following working definition of a revolution has been devised: *A revolution is a rapid and fundamental domestic change in the dominant values and myths of a society, in its political institutions, social structure, leadership and government activity and policies, following violent or non-violent mass protests, which occurs in a particular regional and international context.*

In addition, this work has discussed the major features of the regimes that collapsed during the revolutionary year 1989. The Stalinist model, which was imposed almost simultaneously on the

six countries under discussion in the aftermath of World War II, suffered successive transformations and gave birth to national-communist regimes. These regimes collapsed in 1989 following three patterns, namely: *negotiated*, *peaceful* or *bloody* revolutions. In the terms of this analysis, the 1989 revolutions brought down three types of communist dictatorships, which can be termed as follows: (1) “national-accommodative,” as defined by Kitschelt et al.: Poland and Hungary; (2) “welfare,” as defined by Jarausch: East Germany and Czechoslovakia; and (3) modernizing-nationalizing, a term put forward by this author: Bulgaria and Romania. The “national-accommodative” dictatorships in Poland and Hungary were brought down by “negotiated revolutions” based on the principle of roundtable talks. The “welfare dictatorships” in East Germany and Czechoslovakia collapsed following “peaceful revolutions,” i.e. non-negotiated but non-violent, which occurred in the aftermath of the “negotiated revolutions” in Poland and Hungary. The modernizing-nationalizing dictatorships in Bulgaria and Romania collapsed following different patterns: while in Bulgaria a palace coup precluded the non-negotiated and non-violent revolution, in Romania a bloody revolution brought down the Ceaușescu regime in December 1989.

The complexity of the 1989 phenomenon does not allow for a single-factor explanation. It is clear by now that a variety of factors influenced the political decisions by incumbents and opposition groups in ECE throughout the revolutionary year 1989. Consequently, a causal explanation for the inception, unfolding and outcome of the 1989 revolutions should take into consideration agency and contingency, as well as path dependence. As shown above, the *1989 sequence of collapse* of communist dictatorships in ECE is understood as a *reactive sequence*, in which each event in the sequence represented a reaction to previous events and a cause of subsequent events. An initial event, namely the

roundtable talks in Poland, under the influence of certain external and internal factors, set in motion a chain of closely linked reactions and counter-reactions, which ultimately provoked the breakdown of the communist regimes in the six countries under scrutiny.

As mentioned, the present work employs a model-building approach to explain the demise of the six communist regimes in ECE. The main presupposition that lies at the foundation of the model devised for this purpose is that the 1989 revolutions were determined by a complicated aggregation of *structural*, *conjunctural* and *nation-specific* factors. These factors operated and interacted in various ways in each of the countries analyzed, but they were nevertheless present in each case. This author contends that such a model is able to accommodate issues of path dependence, patterns of compliance and contestation under communist rule, and questions of interdependence at both international and Soviet bloc levels. The particular way in which the above-mentioned factors aggregated determined eventually the nature of the revolution in each of the cases discussed, i.e., negotiated or non-negotiated, peaceful or violent, as well as the order in which the six communist dictatorships were overthrown. This approach, which considers the three groups of factors presented above, has been inspired by the work of Ole Nørgaard and Steven L. Sampson. In their 1984 study "Poland's Crisis and East European Socialism," the two authors explained the birth of the Polish Solidarity as an outcome of social and cultural factors.

Structural factors were common to all six communist societies discussed in this book. The present analysis has identified two structural factors: economic failure and ideological decay. Economic failure refers to the perceived failure of the communist regime in question to offer a living standard similar to that of the more advanced Western societies, and not necessarily to the absolute failure to achieve a certain level of economic development.

The relationship between economic performance and the outbreak of social protest was extensively analyzed in the case of communist Poland. Thus, the Polish crises of 1956, 1970 and 1980–81 led to changes at the top of the PUWP. The crisis of 1988 contributed to bringing down the communist regime in Poland and initiated the chain reaction that led to the demise of communist regimes throughout ECE. The way economic failure was perceived by the populations living in each of the six countries differed from country to country. In some cases, it was a matter of relative dissatisfaction, born of the comparison between the respective societies and the affluent societies of the West, as in the cases of Hungary, East Germany and Czechoslovakia. In other cases, such as that of Romania, the severe food crisis led also to absolute dissatisfaction. This book addresses the problem of real or perceived economic failure in each of the six cases under scrutiny in the context of the strategies put forward by those regimes to achieve economic legitimacy. Since communist rule in ECE was imposed from abroad, the communist power elites had a fundamental legitimacy deficit. Consequently, the issue of increasing prosperity and raising the living standard of the population as a means of achieving legitimacy became central for the communist parties in Sovietized ECE. Throughout this book, the analysis of the economic performance of the six communist regimes concentrates on the economic policies adopted by those regimes and on their efforts aimed at reconciling their political goals with social and economic realities.

Ideological decay refers to the fading away of the utopian goal of building a classless society. This element is common to all six countries under discussion, where state socialism was institutionalized only through a "second revolution" or "revolution from above." The revolutionary struggle of the local communists did not encompass either a "first revolution" on the model of the Bolshevik Revolution or a mixture of revolution and independence

war on the model of Tito's partisan war in Yugoslavia. In other words, the communist elites in the six countries discussed in this book carried out solely a "revolution from above." A series of events which followed Khrushchev's "secret speech," most prominently the Hungarian revolution of October–November 1956, indicated that ideology had undeniably lost its strength in Sovietized Europe. Ideological decay manifested itself differently in the six countries under scrutiny. In Hungary, ideology lost its mobilizing power in the aftermath of the 1956 revolution. In former Czechoslovakia, this happened in 1968 after the suppression of the Prague Spring by the Soviet-led military invasion of the country. In other cases, anti-fascism or nationalism acted for a while in support of the regimes and thus alleviated the undermining effects of ideological decay. In the case of East Germany, it was anti-fascism that offered legitimacy to the communist regime, while in the Romanian case, the post-1956 return to traditional values and gradual instrumentalization of nationalism played the same role. After 1968, under the rule of Ceaușescu, the communist regime in Romania engaged in a sustained policy of assimilating ethnic minorities, with Hungarians being the first target. An outburst of ethnic nationalism also occurred in neighboring Bulgaria, where the communist regime under Zhivkov took the decision to accelerate the forced assimilation of ethnic Turks in order to mitigate popular discontent with the regime's economic performance.

Contingency played an important role in the unfolding of the 1989 events. This work stresses the role of the conjunctural factors in the inception and unfolding of the revolutions of 1989. *Conjunctural factors* are of two kinds, namely internal and external. Among internal conjunctural factors may be mentioned: natural catastrophes (earthquakes, floods or droughts), unusually mild weather, the coming of age of a new generation, etc. Internal conjunctural factors contributed to a lesser extent to the final

demise of the communist regimes in ECE, but they should not be neglected. For instance, in the Romanian case a major internal conjunctural factor was the coming of age of the 1967–69 baby boom resulting from the policy of forced natality launched by Ceaușescu after his coming to power in 1965. The external conjuncture had a decisive impact on the breakdown of all the six communist regimes in ECE. Three external conjunctural factors were often invoked in relation to the 1989 revolutions, namely the "Vatican," "Reagan" and "Gorbachev" factors. The 1978 election of a Polish Pope had a direct influence on the development of dissident stances in Poland in the late 1970s and throughout the 1980s. This factor has been considered when analyzing the initiation of the 1989 revolution in Poland.

However, of all these factors, the "Gorbachev factor" was particularly influential. Gorbachev's insistence on the need for "renewal" and "new thinking" revealed the crisis of the Soviet system. As is well known, after 1968 relations between the USSR and the Sovietized countries of ECE remained under the sign of the Brezhnev Doctrine, which asserted that the USSR had the right to intervene in any country in which the communist government was threatened. Gorbachev's renunciation of this doctrine paved the way for the political transformations in ECE, as the leaders of the Sovietized countries in ECE gradually came to understand that the Soviet Union would not intervene anymore if the socialist order in their countries was threatened by popular revolts. At the same time, one cannot explain the chain reaction that took place in 1989 without taking into consideration the transnational aspect and the issue of interdependence at the Soviet bloc level. Consequently, the present analysis has considered "snowballing," as defined by Huntington, a major external conjunctural factor that influenced the inception and unfolding of the 1989 revolutions.

The two *nation-specific factors* that determined the nature (violent or non-violent), as well as the outcome of the 1989 revolutions are: (1) the political culture of the communist regime in question; and (2) the political culture(s) of resistance against that regime. This author employs the concept of *political culture* in order to analyze the specific relationships between political structures and cultures, as well as the particular patterns of interaction between regime and society for the six countries under scrutiny. By focusing on both attitudes and behavior, as Jowitt suggests, the present work discusses the patterns of conduct of power elites and social actors throughout the communist period. The process of political socialization under the communist regimes displayed two contrasting facets. New, official and “sound” values were inculcated during adolescence and adulthood through schooling and socialization within official organizations, as well as by the centrally controlled mass media. At the same time, old, traditional values proved to be more resilient than previously thought and were handed down to younger generations within family milieus, thus contributing to the development of oppositional stances towards the regime.

Since the present work is concerned with both beliefs and actions, it addresses the main attitudinal and behavioral patterns which emerged during the communist period from this interaction at both the regime and community levels. The regime political culture is understood in this analysis as the official political culture, i.e., the political culture of each communist regime (Polish, Hungarian, East German, Czechoslovak, Bulgarian, or Romanian). As for community political culture, the most significant are its subcultures, which in the terms of the present analysis are defined as the political cultures of resistance against the regime (related primarily to intellectual dissent and working-class protest). The two political cultures became truly adversarial by the end of the 1980s. The interplay of attitudinal and behavioral patterns of actors at regime and community levels

determined the specific nature of the 1989 revolutions in each of the six countries discussed. In the Polish case, the ruling elite opted for a scenario of political transformation based on “path departure,” which ultimately initiated the “negotiated revolution” in that country. In Romania, the ruling elite remained united around the supreme leader and decided for “path stabilization,” and consequently the Romanian revolution was the only violent one among the 1989 revolutions. In other words, it is regime political culture that is the factor of crucial importance in analyzing the violent or non-violent nature of the 1989 revolutions.

Considering all the above, this work has provided a viable explanation regarding the timing, sequence and nature of the 1989 revolutions. The question concerning the *timing* of the 1989 revolutions, namely: “Why did the revolutions in ECE occur precisely in 1989?” in fact requires an answer to the question: “Why did the Polish ‘negotiated revolution’ occur precisely in 1989?” The Polish case has proved the most complicated because the “snowballing effect” did not operate in that case. To explain why the 1989 transformations were initiated in Poland, the present analysis has focused on the crisis of 1980–81, out of which both the power elite and the opposition that negotiated the transition to a new political order in 1989 were born. Communist Poland went through four major crises, in 1956, 1970, 1980–81 and 1988–89. All these crises resulted in major political changes at the level of the power elite. However, the crises of 1956, 1970 and 1980–81 took place in the conditions of a Soviet-dominated ECE. The Soviet Union was determined to restore the “socialist order” in any “fraternal” country where actions from below or from above threatened the existence of the system, and this was made clear by the military interventions in Hungary (November 1956) and Czechoslovakia (August 1968). The crisis of August 1980 was different from the previous ones in the sense that the working-class protest in Gdańsk did not turn violent. The non-violent

occupation and round-the-clock strike forced the regime to negotiate with the strikers, and eventually to permit the establishment of Solidarity. Yet, over the period August 1980–December 1981, Solidarity’s strategy of “self-limitation” envisaged a reformation of the system and not a regime change.

The subsequent coming to the fore of the “military party” under General Jaruzelski and the imposition of Martial Law in December 1981 showed that the PUWP was able to engage in large-scale domestic military operations, benefiting from the backing of the Soviet Union. Moreover, under Jaruzelski, political power was concentrated in the hands of the supreme leader and thus splits at the top of the party were avoided. In the particular context of the late 1980s, when societal unrest was growing while Gorbachev had already left the leaders of the “fraternal” regimes in ECE to their own devices, the power elite in Poland opted for a political transformation centered on “path departure.” Based most probably on the experience of his previous successful preemptive action of December 1981, General Jaruzelski took the decision to open talks with Solidarity in January 1989. In this way he hoped to control the transition process and ensure the political survival of the ruling party. Such a decision was eased by the change of leadership style after December 1981, which enabled the supreme leader of the PUWP to impose on the party his decision to open talks with Solidarity. Equally important, Solidarity’s strategy of self-restraint and its ability to negotiate and seek a compromise in a hostile political environment permitted the negotiations to finalize and the elections of June 1989 to take place. The “negotiated revolution” in Poland pushed the snowball of political changes in ECE downhill.

Regarding the *sequence of events*, this work introduces the 1989 succession of communist dictatorship collapses in ECE as a *reactive sequence*: Poland – Hungary – East Germany – Czechoslovakia – Bulgaria – Romania. This author contends that the revolutions of

1989 did not occur simultaneously, but followed the particular order presented above. As previously mentioned, it is possible to establish the following sequence of collapse of three types of communist dictatorships during the year 1989: “national-accommodative” (Poland and Hungary) – “welfare” (East Germany and Czechoslovakia) – modernizing-nationalizing (Bulgaria and Romania). The revolutionary changes originated in the camp of “national-accommodative” dictatorships. In Poland and Hungary, both incumbents and opposition forces observed the principle of roundtable talks and thus in these two countries the 1989 revolutions were negotiated. The “welfare dictatorships” in East Germany and Czechoslovakia were brought down by non-negotiated revolutions which emerged under the influence of the political transformations in Poland and Hungary. Geographic proximity played a role in this respect. The opening of the Hungarian border with Austria prompted a mass exodus of East German citizens, who crossed the Hungarian border into Austria and continued their journey to West Germany. This exodus led to an increased mobilization of those GDR citizens who did not want to leave their country but were in favor of democratic reforms at home. Unprecedented mobilization by the GDR population led in the end to the opening of the Berlin Wall, an event that had a tremendous influence on the rest of the communist regimes still in power in ECE. In particular, protests from below multiplied in Czechoslovakia during the month of November 1989 and eventually provoked the fall of the regime. The modernizing-nationalizing dictatorships in Bulgaria and Romania were the last in the row to collapse. In Romania, however, the monolithism of the party elite and its policy of relative independence from Moscow made impossible a non-violent exit from communism.

The 1989 sequence of collapse of the communist dictatorships in ECE came into being as such due to the particular way in which regime and society reacted to the structural and conjunctural

factors discussed above in each of the six cases. In other words, the power elites and social actors in each country responded in particular ways to the problem of economic failure and to the phenomenon of ideological decay, as well as to the external or internal conjunctural factors. These particular responses were determined by the respective regime and community political cultures, and determined the place each of the six countries eventually occupied in the 1989 sequence of collapse. At the same time, the solutions for solving the crisis of state socialism conceived by power elites and social actors in each particular context determined the occurrence of negotiated or non-negotiated revolutions.

This work has demonstrated that the *nature of the 1989 revolutions* in ECE, i.e., negotiated or non-negotiated, violent or non-violent, was primarily determined by two important aspects of regime and community political cultures respectively: (1) the unity and cohesion of the power elite and its degree of subordination to, or emancipation from, the Soviet Union; and (2) the existence of political alternatives to the ruling power within society. Where the power elite managed to offer a tacit deal to society, political bargaining became a major element of both regime and community political cultures. Poland and Hungary, which initiated the 1989 sequence of collapse, were the countries that had suffered the most, alongside former Yugoslavia, during World War II. In these two countries, the power elite proved to be less monolithic and splits at the top did take place. In Poland, splits at the top of the PUWP occurred in 1956, 1970 and 1981. The birth of Solidarity was also due to the substantial amount of factionalism within the power elite in Warsaw. True, the amount of factionalism decreased sharply after the coming to power of the “military party” headed by Jaruzelski, which nonetheless proved flexible enough to decide in 1989 for a path departure scenario, i.e., a gradual adaptation to the new context generated by the

Soviet renunciation of the Brezhnev Doctrine. In Hungary, the revolution of October–November 1956 contributed decisively to the development of set of attitudinal and behavioral patterns at both regime and community levels, and in the long-term influenced significantly the inception, unfolding and outcome of the Hungarian “negotiated revolution” of 1989. The 1956 revolution represented a deeply traumatic experience, which prompted the adoption of an evolutionary political strategy, aimed at avoiding the outbreak of similar events. In 1989, after the Polish power elite had initiated the roundtable talks that marked the “strategic compromise” between regime and opposition, Hungary experienced a similar “negotiated revolution” based on the same principle. The adoption of such a negotiated solution in 1989 occurred in countries which had experienced early, though failed, attempts at emancipating themselves from Moscow by establishing a national path to socialism and had been confronted with revolutionary situations prior to 1989 (Solidarity’s “self-limiting revolution” of 1980–81 and the Hungarian Revolution of 1956).

In the former GDR, the task of postwar economic recovery was not only huge due to the high level of war destruction, but also complicated further because of the Soviet dismantling of production facilities. For its part, Czechoslovakia ranked only fourth in terms of capital losses relative to its 1938 national income. One can observe a striking similarity between the GDR and Czechoslovakia in terms of the cohesion of the power elite and its subservience to the Soviet Union. In both countries, the ruling elites displayed a high degree of unity and even when more or less significant splits at the top nevertheless occurred, emancipation from the Soviet Union never became an issue. The Stalinist power elites in Bulgaria and Romania, which did not face the enormous task of postwar reconstruction, proceeded to their “revolutions from above” by making extensive use of random terror. However, the difference between the two communist dictatorships was that

the Romanian communists gradually emancipated themselves from Moscow after 1956, while the Bulgarian communists did not. In those countries where the power elites proved to be more or less monolithic, either because of a higher degree of institutionalization of the ruling communist party (as in East Germany and Czechoslovakia) or because of the establishment of a modernizing-nationalizing dictatorship (as in Bulgaria and Romania), the regime change was non-negotiated and occurred only in the favorable context determined by the “negotiated revolutions” in Poland and Hungary. The non-negotiated revolutions in East Germany, Czechoslovakia and Bulgaria were also non-violent because the power elites decided, under enormous popular pressure, for the path departure scenario. In the Bulgarian case, a palace coup preceded the 1989 revolution. In Romania, the communist power elite which had emancipated itself from the Soviet Union decided for path stabilization and thus for a marginal adaptation to the new international context. Simply put, the power elites which remained more subservient to the Soviet Union gave up power more easily when left to their own devices than the allegedly independent Romanian elite. In short, the communist regimes whose power elites remained fairly monolithic and subservient to Moscow collapsed through non-negotiated but non-violent revolutions in 1989. Where the power elite was monolithic, but had emancipated itself from Moscow, the revolution was not only non-negotiated, but also violent, as in Romania, where the communist elite felt confident enough to order the repression apparatus to shoot to kill and had its orders obeyed in the first stage of the revolution.

Another major factor that determined the nature of each revolution of 1989 was related to the development of political alternatives to communist power within the respective societies. As both Poland and Hungary went through revolutionary experiences under communist rule, the change was negotiated

between two partners. The political actors that negotiated the Polish regime change of 1989 emerged from the confrontation between the PUWP-regime and Solidarity during the interval August 1980–December 1981. The state-sponsored terror unleashed against Solidarity after December 1981 weakened but did not destroy the independent trade union, which remained a redoubtable opposition force. For its part, Hungary experienced a genuine revolution during the period 23 October–4 November 1956. In spite of its bloody suppression by the Soviet troops, the revolutionary experience of 1956 marked the relations between the communist regime and society in Hungary until 1989. The communist regimes in ECE, however, did not collapse because of dissident actions or working-class protests. Nevertheless, the dissident networks which developed in Poland and Hungary prior to the revolutionary year 1989 did contribute to the negotiated nature of the regime change because in both cases the structured opposition was able to become a major political actor during the roundtable talks. In peasant societies that had practically been modernized by the communist regimes, such as Romania and Bulgaria, opposition to communist rule developed slowly. Co-optation by the regime of significant strata of society functioned well until the economic crisis made large segments of the population think in terms of biological survival. Since dissident networks did not appear and cross-class alliances did not emerge in Bulgaria or Romania, communist successor parties emerged as the most powerful contenders for power in post-communism in both countries.

To sum up, this work demonstrates that in 1989, in the six countries under discussion, there were three configurations which linked the monolithism of the power elite and the level of emancipation from Moscow with the degree of structuring of societal opposition in order to determine the nature of the respective revolutions, as follows:

(1) Factionalism of the power elite, which provoked major splits at the top of the communist hierarchy, in the conditions of revolutionary experiences which had lasting society-wide effects – “self-limiting” as in Poland (August 1980–December 1981) or genuine as in Hungary (23 October–4 November 1956) – led to the “negotiated revolutions” in these two countries;

(2) Monolithism of the power elite and a more or less structured societal opposition, in the conditions of a lack of emancipation from Moscow led to “peaceful revolutions,” that is, non-negotiated and non-violent revolutions (East Germany and Czechoslovakia), or to a palace coup followed by unprecedented popular mobilization in support of the opposition (Bulgaria);

(3) Monolithism of the power elite and a poorly structured societal opposition, in the conditions of the emancipation of the power elite from Moscow, led to a non-negotiated and violent revolution (Romania). In Romania, in December 1989 the ruling elite ignored the recent developments in the Soviet bloc, ordered the repressive apparatus to use deadly force against demonstrators, and had its order obeyed in the first instance.

The revolutions of 1989 were events of major historic importance. So much has been said and written about their unexpected inception, convoluted unfolding and ambiguous outcome. This book puts forward a model which is able to explain the timing, sequence and nature of the revolutions which brought down the communist dictatorships in six countries in ECE. The argument reads as follows: these revolutions were provoked by a complicated interplay of structural, conjunctural and nation-specific factors. Nevertheless, what makes the revolutions of 1989 different from similar events in history and such a fascinating research topic is the fact that they represented entangled phenomena of global significance.

Notes

Introduction

The introduction and chapter one are partially based on the first chapter of a previously published work titled *Explaining the Romanian Revolution of 1989: Culture, Structure, and Contingency* (Bucharest: Editura Enciclopedică, 2010).

- ¹ Hannah Arendt, *On Revolutions* (London: Penguin Books, 1990), 28; originally published in 1963.
- ² *Ibid.*, 29.
- ³ Gale Stokes, *The Walls Came Tumbling Down: The Collapse of Communism in Eastern Europe* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1993), 260.
- ⁴ Robert Darnton, *Berlin Journal, 1989–1990* (New York: W. W. Norton & Co., 1991), 192.
- ⁵ Krishan Kumar, *1989: Revolutionary Ideas and Ideals* (Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press, 2001), 40.
- ⁶ S. N. Eisenstadt, “The Breakdown of Communist Regimes,” in Vladimir Tismăneanu, ed., *The Revolutions of 1989* (London: Routledge, 1999), 93; originally published in 1992.
- ⁷ Quoted in Christian Joppke, *East German Dissidents and the Revolution of 1989: Social Movement in a Leninist Regime* (New York: New York University Press, 1995), 133.
- ⁸ Quoted in Kumar, *1989*, 40.

- ⁹ Theda Skocpol, *States and Social Revolutions: A Comparative Analysis of France, Russia and China* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1979), 4.
- ¹⁰ Quoted in Kumar, 1989, 41.
- ¹¹ Eisenstadt, "The Breakdown of Communist Regimes," 91.
- ¹² Charles Tilly, *European Revolutions, 1492–1992* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1993), 8.
- ¹³ Timothy Garton Ash, *The Magic Lantern: The Revolution of '89 Witnessed in Warsaw, Budapest, Berlin and Prague* (New York: Vintage Books, 1993), 20; originally published in 1990.
- ¹⁴ Timothy Garton Ash, "Conclusions" to Sorin Antohi and Vladimir Tismăneanu, eds., *Between Past and Future: The Revolutions of 1989 and Their Aftermath* (Budapest: Central European University Press, 2000), 395.
- ¹⁵ J. F. Brown, *Surge to Freedom: The End of Communist Rule in Eastern Europe* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1991), 1.
- ¹⁶ See, for instance, Adrian Marino, "Triptic," in Iordan Chimet, ed., *Momentul adevărului* (Cluj-Napoca: Editura Dacia, 1996), 312, and Olivier Gillet, *Religion et nationalisme: L'Ideologie de l'Eglise orthodoxe roumaine sous le regime communiste* (Brussels: Éditions de l'Université de Bruxelles, 1997), 132.
- ¹⁷ Garton Ash, "Conclusions" to Antohi and Tismăneanu, eds., *Between Past and Future*, 395.
- ¹⁸ Garton Ash, *The Magic Lantern*, 14.
- ¹⁹ Adam Michnik, "A Specter Is Haunting Europe," in idem, *Letters from Freedom: Post-Cold War Realities and Perspectives*, edited by Irena Grudzińska Gross (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1998), 117; originally published in *Gazeta Wyborcza*, 9 May 1989.
- ²⁰ Tóké also emphasized the Hungarian political traditions of reaching such agreements in complicated times: "Negotiation as an instrument of choice for the reconciliation of seemingly intractable differences in political beliefs and interests has well-established historic and contemporary precedents in Hungary." Rudolf L. Tóké, *Hungary's Negotiated Revolution: Economic Reform, Social Change, and Political Succession, 1957–1990* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), 7–8.
- ²¹ Ibid., 439.
- ²² Béla K. Király, "Soft Dictatorship, Lawful Revolution, and the Socialists' Return to Power," in idem, ed., *Lawful Revolution in Hungary, 1989–94* (Boulder, CO: Social Science Monographs,

1995), 5. Király draws on historian István Deák's term of "lawful revolution," employed in his masterful account of the 1848–49 revolution in Hungary and centered on the legendary figure of Louis Kossuth. In this respect, Deák noted: "As the Hungarian liberals saw it, theirs had not been a revolution at all, but a peaceful adjustment to the times and the legal reconquest of Hungary's historical freedoms. Their actions had been forceful, dignified, and magnanimous: his Majesty's ancient rights had not been curtailed, only the dual sovereignty of king and nation under the Crown of Saint Stephen had now been reconstituted." István Deák, *The Lawful Revolution: Louis Kossuth and the Hungarians 1848–1849* (London: Phoenix Press, 2001), 99; originally published in 1979.

- ²³ "The regime change is a peculiar type of rapid social transformation. It resembles revolution inasmuch as the legitimacy of the previous regime is broken during its course, and thus an unstable, unpredictable political situation comes about. It resembles reforms in that the vacuum of legitimacy is not correlated with the dispersion of power, the continuity of legality is not interrupted. What makes the situation manageable is that the political actors endeavor to set up mutually acceptable rules of the game." János Kis, "Between Reform and Revolution: Three Hypotheses About the Nature of the Regime Change," in Király, ed., *Lawful Revolution in Hungary*, 53.
- ²⁴ Herbert Kitschelt, Zdenka Mansfeldova, Radoslaw Markowski and Gábor Tóka, *Post-Communist Party Systems: Competition, Representation, and Inter-Party Cooperation* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), 31.
- ²⁵ Karl-Dieter Opp, "Some Conditions for the Emergence of Spontaneous, Nonviolent Revolutions," in Karl-Dieter Opp, Peter Voss and Christiane Gern, *Origins of a Spontaneous Revolution: East Germany, 1989* (Ann Arbor, MI: The University of Michigan Press, 1995), 225.
- ²⁶ John F. N. Bradley, *Czechoslovakia's Velvet Revolution: A Political Analysis* (Boulder, CO: East European Monographs, 1992), 105.
- ²⁷ With regard to the emergence of a "preemptive reform," Kitschelt et al. observe: "Once changes in the international situation made it uncertain whether communist rule could survive anywhere, factions of the incumbent elites had strong incentives to seize the initiative, displace the discredited top communist leadership, and engineer regime change via preemptive reform with only minimal input from

the emerging democratic opposition forces.” Kitschelt et al., *Post-Communist Party Systems*, 30.

²⁸ Juan J. Linz and Alfred Stepan, *Problems of Democratic Transition and Consolidation: Southern Europe, South America, and Post-Communist Europe* (Baltimore, MD: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1996), 344.

²⁹ Sorin Antohi, “Higher Education and the Post-Communist Generation of Students,” in Henry F. Carey, ed., *Romania since 1989: Politics, Economics, and Society* (Lanham, MD: Lexington Books, 2004), 335.

³⁰ Dorin Tudoran, *Kakistocrația* (Kishinev: Editura Arc, 1998), 519.

³¹ Leslie Holmes, *Post-Communism: An Introduction* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1997), 14.

³² Karol Soltan, “1989 as Rebirth,” in Antohi and Tismăneanu, eds., *Between Past and Future*, 25.

³³ Ibid., 37.

³⁴ Paul Kecskemeti, *The Unexpected Revolution: Social Forces in the Hungarian Uprising* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1961).

³⁵ Although grand utopian dreams were absent in 1989, “small” utopias were nevertheless present and inspired the revolutionaries of 1989. For instance, large segments of the populations living under state socialism developed an idealized image of the West and “the American way of life,” which determined in many respects the “restorative” character of the 1989 revolutions. For more on the emergence of an idealized image of the West in communist Romania see Dragoș Petrescu, “Conflicting Perceptions of (Western) Europe: The Case of Communist Romania, 1958–1989,” in José M. Faraldo, Paulina Gulińska-Jurgiel and Christian Domnitz, eds., *Europa im Ostblock: Vorstellungen und Diskurse, 1945–1991* (Cologne: Böhlau Verlag, 2008), 199–220.

³⁶ Jürgen Kocka, “The GDR: A Special Kind of Modern Dictatorship,” in Konrad H. Jarausch, ed., *Dictatorship as Experience: Towards a Socio-Cultural History of the GDR*, translated by Eve Duffy (New York: Berghahn Books, 1999), 22.

³⁷ Eisenstadt, “The Breakdown of Communist Regimes,” 100.

³⁸ As Scruton notes: “Traditional societies derived their legitimacy from some previous state, in which the gods themselves had authorized the tribe; the metanarratives of modernity, by contrast, confer legitimacy directly on the present moment, by showing how it might be seized for the benefit of all. Their legitimizing power stems from

their universality – the good that is promised (freedom, enlightenment, socialism, prosperity, progress, etc.) is promised to all mankind, and the project of modernity is cosmopolitan, involving the dissolution of traditional communities and their release into the collective future.” In contradistinction, the same author further points out, the postmodern condition is characterized by the fact that: “Those metanarratives have lost their justifying force – the paths of emancipation have all been explored, the promises have been fulfilled, and we find ourselves released from tradition, free and equal members of a world community in which every lifestyle and every value becomes openly available.” Roger Scruton, *The Palgrave Macmillan Dictionary of Political Thought*, 3rd ed. (Basingstoke, UK: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007), 541.

³⁹ Eisenstadt, “The Breakdown of Communist Regimes,” 101.

⁴⁰ Daniel Chirot, “What Happened in Eastern Europe in 1989?” in idem, ed., *The Crisis of Leninism and the Decline of the Left: The Revolutions of 1989* (Seattle, WA: University of Washington Press, 1991), 4.

⁴¹ Ibid.

Chapter One: Conceptual Framework and Methodological Approach

¹ Samuel P. Huntington, *Political Order in Changing Societies* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1968), 264; Holmes, *Post-Communism*, 131; and Opp, “Some Conditions for the Emergence of Spontaneous, Nonviolent Revolutions,” in Opp, Voss and Gern, *Origins of a Spontaneous Revolution*, 225.

² According to Kitschelt et al., the communist regimes in ECE can be defined as follows: (1) bureaucratic-authoritarian communism – East Germany and Czech Republic; (2) mix of bureaucratic-authoritarian and national-accommodative communism – Poland; (3) national-accommodative communism – Hungary; (4) mix of national-accommodative and patrimonial communism – Slovakia; and (5) patrimonial communism – Bulgaria and Romania. See Table 1.2. – Communist rule, mode of transition, and post-communist regime form, in Kitschelt et al., *Post-Communist Party Systems*, 39.

³ Konrad H. Jarausch, “Care and Coercion: The GDR as Welfare Dictatorship,” in idem, ed., *Dictatorship as Experience*, 59–60.

- ⁴ The establishment of a modernizing-nationalizing dictatorship presupposes that the respective communist regime is characterized by a “nationalizing nationalism,” apart from its propensity towards “socialist” modernization. In such situations, the party-state in the making perceives itself as “unrealized” in national terms, which in turn imposes the adoption of a “dynamic political stance:” the communist state is not yet national in its entirety and therefore it is imperative to be “nationalizing.” As Rogers Brubaker puts it: “Nationalizing nationalisms involve claims made in the name of a ‘core nation’ or nationality, defined in ethnocultural terms.... The core nation is understood as the legitimate ‘owner’ of the state, which is conceived as the state *of* and *for* the core nation [original emphasis].” Rogers Brubaker, *Nationalism Reframed: Nationhood and the National Question in the New Europe* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), 5 and 63.
- ⁵ Bernhard Ebbinghaus, “Can Path Dependence Explain Institutional Change? Two Approaches Applied to Welfare State Reform,” Discussion Paper 05/2 (Cologne: Max Planck Institute for the Study of Societies, 2005), 14.
- ⁶ Ole Nørgaard and Steven L. Sampson, “Poland’s Crisis and East European Socialism,” in *Theory and Society*, Vol. 13, No. 6 (November 1984), 773–801. For a critical analysis of the model proposed by Nørgaard and Sampson see Michael D. Kennedy, *Professionals, Power and Solidarity in Poland: A Critical Sociology of Soviet-Type Society* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991), 60–62.
- ⁷ Nørgaard and Sampson, “Poland’s Crisis,” 773–74.
- ⁸ According to Lewin, a “command economy” is characterized by the following elements: “(1) a high degree of centralization of economic decision making and planning; (2) comprehensive character of planning; (3) preference for physical units as instruments in accounting; (4) the use of ‘material balances’ for obtaining internal consistency of the plans; (5) a centralized administration for material supplies, which operated as a rationing system; (6) the imperative and detailed character of plans; (7) a hierarchically organized administration within factories; (8) the relegation of market categories and mechanisms to a secondary role, mainly to the sphere, albeit important, of personal consumption and to labor; and (9) coercion by the state, as direct organizer of the economy with its ubiquitous controls and etatization not only of the economy but of

- the other spheres of life as well.” Moshe Lewin, *Political Undercurrents in Soviet Economic Debates: From Bukharin to the Modern Reformers* (London: Pluto Press, 1975), 113–14.
- ⁹ Derek H. Aldcroft and Steven Morewood, *Economic Change in Eastern Europe since 1918* (Aldershot, UK: Edward Elgar Publishing, 1995), 110.
- ¹⁰ George Kolankiewicz and Paul G. Lewis, *Poland: Politics, Economics and Society* (London: Pinter Publishers, 1988), 102.
- ¹¹ Cited in Bartłomiej Kamiński, *The Collapse of State Socialism: The Case of Poland* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1991), 127.
- ¹² Aldcroft and Morewood, *Economic Change in Eastern Europe*, 106.
- ¹³ Kamiński, *The Collapse of State Socialism*, 120–21.
- ¹⁴ János Kornai, *Evolution of the Hungarian Economy, 1848–1998*; Vol. 2, *Paying the Bill for Goulash-Communism* (Boulder, CO: East European Monographs, 2000), 19.
- ¹⁵ Kornai, *Paying the Bill for Goulash-Communism*, 41–42.
- ¹⁶ Michael Shafir, *Romania: Politics, Economics and Society. Political Stagnation and Simulated Change* (London: Frances Pinter Publishers, 1985), 117.
- ¹⁷ Reputed economists from ECE, such as Brus and Kornai, provide sophisticated analyses of the centrally planned economies in the Soviet bloc. See Włodzimierz Brus, *Histoire économique de l’Europe de l’Est, 1945–1985* (Paris: Éditions La Découverte, 1986), originally published in 1981, and János Kornai, *The Socialist System: The Political Economy of Communism* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1992).
- ¹⁸ This aspect was also defined as the “disintegration of ideology.” See András Bozóki, “Introduction” to idem, ed., *The Roundtable Talks of 1989: The Genesis of Hungarian Democracy* (Budapest: Central European University Press, 2002), xix.
- ¹⁹ Robert C. Tucker, “Preface” to idem, *Stalin in Power: The Revolution from Above, 1928–1941* (New York: W. W. Norton & Co., 1990), xiv–xv.
- ²⁰ Andrzej Walicki, *Marxism and the Leap to the Kingdom of Freedom: The Rise and Fall of the Communist Utopia* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1995), 517.
- ²¹ Stefan Wolle, *DDR* (Frankfurt/Main: Fischer Verlag, 2004), 46.
- ²² R. J. Crampton, *A Concise History of Bulgaria*, 2nd ed. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), 204–205.

- ²³ In structuring the conjunctural factors on two categories, internal and external, this author draws on the analysis of the four conjunctural factors identified to have contributed to the emergence of the Polish crisis of 1980–81, put forward by Nørgaard and Sampson: (1) “the world economic crisis and its effect on Eastern Europe;” (2) “the degree to which economic dependence on the West was linked to internal regime legitimacy;” (3) “the demographic shifts that created certain unresolvable social strains in Polish society;” and (4) “the effect of natural calamities, poor harvests, and food shortages in creating popular dissatisfaction.” See Nørgaard and Sampson, “Poland’s Crisis,” 780.
- ²⁴ For more on explaining “relations, connections, entanglements and constellations that extend beyond the borders between nation states, regions, and civilizations,” see Jürgen Kocka and Heinz-Gerhard Haupt, “Comparison and Beyond: Traditions, Scope, and Perspectives of Comparative History,” in Heinz-Gerhard Haupt and Jürgen Kocka, eds., *Comparative and Transnational History: Central European Approaches and New Perspectives* (New York: Berghahn Books, 2012), 1–30; originally published in 2009.
- ²⁵ Samuel P. Huntington, *The Third Wave: Democratization in the Late Twentieth Century* (Norman, OK: University of Oklahoma Press, 1991), 33.
- ²⁶ Leszek Kołakowski, “Amidst Moving Ruins,” in Tismăneanu, ed., *The Revolutions of 1989*, 56; originally published in 1992.
- ²⁷ Ibid., 56.
- ²⁸ Archie Brown, *The Gorbachev Factor* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996), 249.
- ²⁹ Andrew C. Janos, *East Central Europe in the Modern World: The Politics of the Borderlands from Pre- to Postcommunism* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2000), 343.
- ³⁰ Alexandre Yakovlev, *Ce que nous voulons faire de l’Union Soviétique: Entretien avec Lilly Marcou* (Paris: Éditions du Seuil, 1991). The passage quoted is from the Romanian version, Alexandr Iakovlev, *Ce vrem să facem din Uniunea Sovietică: Convorbire cu Lilly Marcou*, translated from French by Sanda Grigoriu (Bucharest: Editura Humanitas, 1991), 114.
- ³¹ Timothy Garton Ash, *In Europe’s Name: Germany and the Divided Continent* (New York: Vintage Books, 1994), 4.
- ³² Marc Howard Ross, “Culture and Identity in Comparative Political Analysis,” in Mark Irving Lichbach and Alan S. Zuckerman, eds.,

- Comparative Politics: Rationality, Culture, and Structure* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), 52 and 60.
- ³³ Quoted in Ross, “Culture and Identity in Comparative Political Analysis,” 52.
- ³⁴ Gabriel A. Almond and Sydney Verba, *The Civic Culture: Political Attitudes and Democracy in Five Nations* (Newbury Park, CA: Sage Publications, 1989), 12.
- ³⁵ Gabriel A. Almond and G. Bingham Powell Jr., *Comparative Politics Today: A World-View* (New York: Harper Collins, 1992), 39.
- ³⁶ Sidney Verba, “Comparative Political Culture,” in Louis J. Cantori, ed., *Comparative Political Systems* (Boston, MA: Holbrook Press, 1974), 227.
- ³⁷ Quoted in Jeffrey Haynes, *Comparative Politics in a Globalizing World* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2005), 181.
- ³⁸ Quoted in Haynes, *Comparative Politics*, 181.
- ³⁹ Archie Brown, “Introduction” to Archie Brown and Jack Gray, eds., *Political Culture and Political Change in Communist States* (London: Macmillan, 1977), 1.
- ⁴⁰ Gabriel A. Almond, “Communism and Political Culture Theory,” in idem, *A Discipline Divided: Schools and Sects in Political Science* (Newbury Park, CA: Sage Publications, 1990), 158.
- ⁴¹ Brown also puts forward an analytical framework for the study of communist political cultures based on the following main themes: (1) previous political experience; (2) values and fundamental political beliefs; (3) foci of identification and loyalty; and (4) political knowledge and expectations. See Brown, “Introduction,” 16–18.
- ⁴² Brown, “Introduction,” 9.
- ⁴³ Kenneth Jowitt, *New World Disorder: The Leninist Extinction* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1992), 51.
- ⁴⁴ Ibid., 55.
- ⁴⁵ Ibid., 55–56.
- ⁴⁶ This approach is based on Ebbinghaus’ analysis of three scenarios of institutional transformation, i.e., path stabilization, path departure and path cessation or switching. See Ebbinghaus, “Can Path Dependence Explain Institutional Change?” 17–18.
- ⁴⁷ James Mahoney, “Path Dependence in Historical Sociology,” *Theory and Society*, Vol. 29, No. 4 (August 2000), 508 and 526. See also Scott E. Page, “Path Dependence,” *Quarterly Journal of Political Science*, Vol. 1, Issue 1 (January 2006), 87–89.
- ⁴⁸ Page, “Path Dependence,” 104–105.

- ⁴⁹ Bozóki, "Introduction" to idem, ed., *The Roundtable Talks of 1989*, xvii.
- ⁵⁰ Václav Havel, "New Year's Address" (January 1990) in idem, *Open Letters: Selected Writings 1965–1990*, selected and edited by Paul Wilson (New York: Vintage Books, 1992), 394.
- ⁵¹ For more on the UDF see Duncan M. Perry, "From Opposition to Government: Bulgaria's 'Union of Democratic Forces' and its Antecedents," in Wolfgang Höpken, ed., *Revolution auf Raten: Bulgariens Weg zur Demokratie* (Munich: Oldenbourg Wissenschaftsverlag, 1996), 34. See also Crampton, *A Concise History of Bulgaria*, 212–13, and Ivan Ilchev, *The Rose of the Balkans: A Short History of Bulgaria*, translated from Bulgarian by Bistra Roushkova (Sofia: Colibri, 1995), 402–403.
- ⁵² Quoted in Aldcroft and Morewood, *Economic Change in Eastern Europe*, 92.
- ⁵³ Detlef Pollack and Jan Wielgohs, "Introduction" to idem, eds., *Dissent and Opposition in Communist Eastern Europe: Origins of Civil Society and Democratic Transition* (Aldershot, UK: Ashgate, 2004), xv.
- ⁵⁴ Linz and Stepan, *Problems of Democratic Transition and Consolidation*, 247.

Chapter Two: Poland

- ¹ Kołakowski, "Amidst Moving Ruins," in Tismăneanu, ed., *The Revolutions of 1989*, 57–58.
- ² For more on the political struggle concerning the emulation of the Soviet economic model in Poland, see the analysis of the February 1948 attacks on the Central Office of Planning (*Centralny Urząd Planowania*—CUP), in Krystyna Kersten, *The Establishment of Communist Rule in Poland, 1943–1948*, translated and annotated by John Micgiel and Michael H. Bernhard (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1991), 429–32.
- ³ For more on the launch of the Six-Year Plan see Hilary Minc, "The Six-Year Plan of economic development and building the foundations of socialism in Poland," Report delivered at the Fifth Plenary Session of the Central Committee of the Polish United Workers Party on 15 July 1950, and Bolesław Bierut, "We are building the structure of socialist Poland," Closing speech at the

Fifth Plenary Session of the Central Committee of the Polish United Workers Party delivered on 16 July 1950; Internet; <http://www.revolutionarydemocracy.org/archive/poland.htm>; accessed 9 February 2014.

- ⁴ For a general assessment of the radical transformations underwent by the economies of the newly established "popular democracies" in ECE, see Brus, *Histoire économique de l'Europe de l'Est*, 30–68.
- ⁵ According to Kolankiewicz and Lewis, between 1950 and 1954 over 15 percent of the national income was allocated to the production of weaponry, which also explains the preferential treatment of the machine-building industry. Kolankiewicz and Lewis, *Poland*, 102.
- ⁶ R. J. Crampton, *Eastern Europe in the Twentieth Century* (London: Routledge, 1994), 284.
- ⁷ For a brief analysis of the economic reforms introduced immediately after Gomułka's return to power in October 1956 see Brus, *Histoire économique de l'Europe de l'Est*, 86–87.
- ⁸ During the period 1959–62, the average growth of the investment in the producer goods sector was of 11 percent per year; during the same period, the imports of equipment and machinery grew by 18 percent per year. See R. F. Leslie, Antony Polonsky, Jan M. Ciechanowski and Z. A. Pelczynski, *The History of Poland since 1863* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1980), 378–79.
- ⁹ Kolankiewicz and Lewis, *Poland*, 103.
- ¹⁰ Roman Laba, *The Roots of Solidarity: A Political Sociology of Poland's Working-Class Democratization* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1991), 15.
- ¹¹ See the discussion in Michael Gamarnikov, "Poland and Czechoslovakia: The Pitfalls of Economic Prophecy in the Communist World," in Peter J. D. Wiles, ed., *The Prediction of Communist Economic Performance* (London: Cambridge University Press, 1971), 262–64. See also Brus, *Histoire économique de l'Europe de l'Est*, 252–53.
- ¹² Laba, *The Roots of Solidarity*, 16–17.
- ¹³ Kennedy, *Professionals, Power and Solidarity*, 36–37.
- ¹⁴ Over the period 1976–80, the hard currency debt of Poland, in billions USD, evolved as follows: 11.4 in 1976; 13.9 in 1977; 17.8 in 1978; 21.0 in 1979 and 25.1 in 1980. See Table B.1 in Kamiński, *The Collapse of State Socialism*, 239.

- ¹⁵ For more on the economic changes introduced by the Gierek regime in the early 1970s, see Brus, *Histoire économique de l'Europe de l'Est*, 254–57.
- ¹⁶ Kennedy, *Professionals, Power and Solidarity*, 37.
- ¹⁷ Kolankiewicz and Lewis, *Poland*, 104.
- ¹⁸ The price rises were substantial: 69 percent for meat and fish; 100 percent for sugar; 60 percent for butter and cheese; and 30 percent for poultry and vegetables. See Michael H. Bernhard, *The Origins of Democratization in Poland: Workers, Intellectuals, and Oppositional Politics, 1976–1980* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1993), 49.
- ¹⁹ Jason C. Sharman, *Repression and Resistance in Communist Europe* (New York: RoutledgeCurzon, 2003), 102–103. On the history of the Ursus tractor factory, see <http://en.ursus.com.pl/History>; Internet; accessed 2 February 2014; on the history of the Radom arms factory, see Fabryka Broni „Łucznik”–Radom; Internet; <http://www.fabrykabroni.pl/tresci.php>; accessed 2 February 2014.
- ²⁰ This episode is addressed below in the section on the political cultures of resistance in communist Poland.
- ²¹ For an analysis of the Polish economy during the period 1970–80, see Zbigniew M. Fallenbuchl, “National Income Statistics for Poland, 1970–1980: A Background Study for Dollar GNPs of the USSR and Eastern Europe,” World Bank Staff Working Papers, No. 776 (Washington, D.C.: The World Bank, 1985); Internet; http://www-wds.worldbank.org/external/default/WDSPContentServer/WDSP/IB/2003/08/02/000178830_98101903433839/Rendered/PDF/multi0page.pdf; accessed 21 June 2014. See also David S. Mason, *Public Opinion and Political Change in Poland, 1980–1982* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985), 53.
- ²² Kolankiewicz and Lewis, *Poland*, 106. According to Wróbel, Poland bought 452 licenses during the period 1971–80. See Piotr Wróbel, *Historical Dictionary of Poland, 1945–1996* (Milton Park, UK: Routledge, 2013), 85–86.
- ²³ Mason, *Public Opinion and Political Change*, 57.
- ²⁴ Kamiński, *The Collapse of State Socialism*, 243.
- ²⁵ Ibid., 221 and 227.
- ²⁶ Kamiński, *The Collapse of State Socialism*, 26.
- ²⁷ On the concept of “self-limiting revolution,” see Jadwiga Staniszkis, *Poland's Self-Limiting Revolution* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1984).

- ²⁸ As Linz and Stepan observe: “The stateness variable has particular importance in Poland, but in a profoundly different way than in the Soviet Union.... The Polish people’s support for the nation was one of the most emotionally and historically intense in Europe. Poland had gone from being one of the major European powers to being ‘stateless’ from 1795 to 1918 owing to conquest and partition at the hands of Russia, Prussia, and Austria.” Linz and Stepan, *Problems of Democratic Transition and Consolidation*, 258.
- ²⁹ Kersten, *The Establishment of Communist Rule in Poland*, 468.
- ³⁰ Włodzimierz Brus, “Stalinism and the ‘Peoples’ Democracies,” in Robert C. Tucker, ed., *Stalinism: Essays in Historical Interpretation* (New York: W. W. Norton & Co., 1977), 247.
- ³¹ Kenneth Jowitt, *Revolutionary Breakthroughs and National Development: The Case of Romania, 1944–1965* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1971), 76.
- ³² For more on social and economic developments in Poland during the Stalinist period see Brus, “Stalinism and the ‘Peoples’ Democracies,” 245–49.
- ³³ Bertram D. Wolfe, *Khrushchev and Stalin's Ghost: Text, Background and Meaning of Khrushchev's Secret Report to the Twentieth Congress on the Night of February 24–25, 1956* (New York: Frederick A. Praeger, 1957); an electronic version available at: http://archive.org/stream/khrushchevandst008917mbp/khrushchevandst008917mbp_djvu.txt. For the full text of Khrushchev’s speech see: <http://www.marxists.org/archive/khrushchev/1956/02/24.htm>; accessed 23 February 2014.
- ³⁴ Leszek Kołakowski, *Main Currents of Marxism: Its Origins, Growth and Dissolution*; Vol. 3, *The Breakdown*, translated by P. S. Falla (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1990), 453; originally published in 1978.
- ³⁵ See in this respect Khrushchev’s own recollections in *Khrushchev Remembers: The Glasnost Tapes*, translated and edited by Jerrold L. Schecter with Vyacheslav V. Luchkov (Boston, MA: Little, Brown and Co., 1990), 113–21.
- ³⁶ Andrzej Korbonski, “Dissent in Poland, 1956–76,” in Jane Leftwich Curry, ed., *Dissent in Eastern Europe* (New York: Praeger Publishers, 1983), 39.
- ³⁷ In this regard, Kołakowski states: “‘Revisionism’ did not come from reading Bernstein but from living under Stalin. However vaguely the term was used by party leaders ... there was in the fifties and

sixties a genuine, active political and intellectual movement which, operating for a time within Marxism or at least using Marxist language, had a highly disruptive effect on communist doctrine.” Kołakowski, *Main Currents of Marxism*, 457.

³⁸ For a detailed analysis of the reaction of the Polish communist elite to the Six-Day Arab-Israeli War of June 1967 and the subsequent anti-Israeli propaganda campaign, see Bożena Szaynok, *Poland–Israel, 1944–1968: In the Shadow of the Past and of the Soviet Union*, translated by Dominika Ferens (Warsaw: Institute of National Remembrance, 2012), 398–444.

³⁹ Dariusz Stola, “Anti-Zionism as a Multipurpose Policy Instrument: The Anti-Zionist Campaign in Poland, 1967–1968,” *The Journal of Israeli History*, Vol. 25, No. 1 (March 2006), 193–95.

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, 196.

⁴¹ Both authors are quoted in Andrzej Swidlicki, *Political trials in Poland 1981–1986* (Beckenham, UK: Croom Helm, 1988), 7.

⁴² Mikhail Gorbachev and Zdeněk Mlynář, *Conversations with Gorbachev: On Perestroika, the Prague Spring, and the Crossroads of Socialism*, translated by George Shriver (New York: Columbia University Press, 2002), 84–85. Mlynář was a prominent figure of the 1968 Prague Spring. It is worth noting that in his youth he studied together with Gorbachev at the Law School of Moscow University.

⁴³ Linz and Stepan, *Problems of Democratic Transition and Consolidation*, 260.

⁴⁴ Michnik, *Letters from Freedom*, 75–76.

⁴⁵ Norman Davies, *Heart of Europe: The Past in Poland's Present*, new edition (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001), 3–25 and 408–415.

⁴⁶ For more on the 1938 dissolution of the CPP see Jaff Schatz, *The Generation: The Rise and Fall of the Jewish Communists of Poland* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1991), 102–103.

⁴⁷ Jan B. de Weydenthal, *The Communists of Poland: An Historical Outline*, revised edition (Stanford, CA: Hoover Institution Press, 1986), 32–33.

⁴⁸ Schatz, *The Generation*, 179–80.

⁴⁹ For more on the creation of PUWP, see Kersten, *The Establishment of Communist Rule in Poland*, 466–67.

⁵⁰ For details regarding Gomułka's ousting, see *ibid.*, 451–57.

⁵¹ See excerpts from the 1948 confession of Gomułka in Robert V. Daniels, ed., *A Documentary History of Communism and the World: From Revolution to Collapse*, 3rd ed. (Hanover, NH: University Press of New England, 1994), 118–19.

⁵² Weydenthal, *The Communists of Poland*, 84–85.

⁵³ François Fejtö, *A History of the People's Democracies: Eastern Europe Since Stalin*, translated by Daniel Weissbord (New York: Praeger, 1971), 51 and Stola, “Anti-Zionism as a Multipurpose Policy Instrument,” 178.

⁵⁴ Weydenthal, *The Communists of Poland*, 87.

⁵⁵ Leslie et al., *History of Poland since 1863*, 384–85.

⁵⁶ The bad weather conditions added to the economic problems Poland had to face in the mid-1960s. For instance, the winter of 1962–63 was extremely harsh and provoked major economic disruptions. As a consequence, in 1963 industrial production grew by a mere 5 percent. *Ibid.*, 379.

⁵⁷ Janos, *East Central Europe in the Modern World*, 290–91.

⁵⁸ For a comprehensive analysis of the scope and meanings of the 1968 “anti-Zionist” campaign, see Stola, “Anti-Zionism as a Multipurpose Policy Instrument,” 180–96. See also Szaynok, *Poland–Israel, 1944–1968*, 445–57.

⁵⁹ Weydenthal, *The Communists of Poland*, 180.

⁶⁰ Crampton, *Eastern Europe*, 374–76.

⁶¹ On the concentration of power in the hands of Jaruzelski after 13 December 1981, see Swidlicki, *Political Trials in Poland*, 7–8. For more on the structure and mission of the National Defense Committee, see Andrew A. Michta, *Red Eagle: The Army in Polish Politics, 1944–1988* (Stanford, CA: Hoover Institution Press, 1990), 182–85.

⁶² Swidlicki, *Political trials in Poland*, 5.

⁶³ *Ibid.*

⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, 11–14.

⁶⁵ During the period 1972–81, Kukliński provided the CIA with some 40,000 pages of secret documents related to the Warsaw Treaty Organization. For more on this spectacular case of Cold War espionage see, for instance, “A Look Back... A Cold War Hero: Colonel Ryszard Kuklinski,” Internet; <https://www.cia.gov/news-information/featured-story-archive/2010-featured-story-archive/colonel-ryszard-kuklinski.html>; accessed 26 April 2014.

- ⁶⁶ Report by Col. Kuklinski on *Jaruzelski's Attitude, Behavior, and Style*; Cold War International History Project (CWIHP); Internet; <http://www.wilsoncenter.org/sites/default/files/19830101.pdf>; 47. A number of Kukliński materials can be freely downloaded from the CWIHP website at the Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars in Washington, D.C. See "New Kuklinski Documents on Martial Law in Poland Released," 11 December 2008; Internet; <http://www.wilsoncenter.org/article/new-kuklinski-documents-martial-law-poland-released>; accessed 26 April 2014. For a detailed assessment of the importance of the Kukliński materials, see Mark Kramer, *The Kuklinski Files and the Polish Crisis of 1980–1981: An Analysis of the Newly Released CIA Documents on Ryszard Kuklinski*, The Cold War International History Project Working Paper Series, Working Paper No. 59 (March 2009); Internet; http://www.wilsoncenter.org/sites/default/files/WP59_Kramer_webfinal1.pdf; accessed 27 April 2014.
- ⁶⁷ Report by Col. Kuklinski on *Jaruzelski's Attitude, Behavior, and Style*, 9 and 16–17.
- ⁶⁸ Jacek Zakowski quoted in Ray Taras, "Politics in Poland," in Gabriel A. Almond, Russell J. Dalton and G. Bingham Powell Jr., eds., *European Politics Today* (New York: Longman, 1999), 374.
- ⁶⁹ For more on the Soviet pressure on Kania and subsequently on Jaruzelski to crush Solidarity, including military preparation for intervention, see Kramer, *The Kuklinski Files and the Polish Crisis of 1980–1981*, 9–11.
- ⁷⁰ As mentioned in Chapter One, this approach is based on Ebbinghaus's analysis of the three scenarios of institutional transformation, as follows: (1) path stabilization, i.e., "marginal adaptation to environmental changes without changing core principles;" (2) path departure, i.e., "gradual adaptation through partial renewal of institutional arrangements and limited redirection of core principles;" and (3) path cessation or switching, i.e., "intervention that ends the self-reinforcement of an established institution and may give way to a new institution in its place." See Ebbinghaus, "Can Path Dependence Explain Institutional Change?" 17–18.
- ⁷¹ The Joseph Stalin Works Poznań, formerly Hipolit Cegielski Poznań factories, was at the time one of the most important industrial facilities in Poland and had working-class traditions from the interwar period. See Kennedy, *Professionals, Power and Solidarity*, 26. For a comprehensive analysis of the significance of the 1956 Poznań

- uprising, including the way the event has been remembered in post-communist Poland, see Izabella Main, "Commemorations and Memories of Poznań June 1956," in Agnieszka Gasior, Agnieszka Halemba and Stefan Troebst, eds., *Gebrochene Kontinuitäten: Transnationalität in den Erinnerungskulturen Ostmitteleuropas im 20. Jahrhundert* (Cologne: Böhlau Verlag, 2014), 277–304.
- ⁷² Main, "Commemorations and Memories of Poznań June 1956," 278.
- ⁷³ Crampton, *Eastern Europe*, 285. See also Kennedy, *Professionals, Power and Solidarity*, 26.
- ⁷⁴ Main, "Commemorations and Memories of Poznań June 1956," 279.
- ⁷⁵ The following examples of price increases are telling: the price of meat rose by 17.5 percent; fish by 11.7 percent; lard by 33.4 percent; jams and marmalade by 36.8 percent. The fact that the new food prices were introduced just before Christmas aggravated the anxiety of the workers. See Laba, *The Roots of Solidarity*, 16 and 19.
- ⁷⁶ Ibid., 68.
- ⁷⁷ Polish Radio English Section, "1970 Gdynia massacre of 42 workers remembered" (17 December 2012); Internet; <http://www.thenews.pl/1/9/Artykul/121690,1970-Gdynia-massacre-of-42-workers-remembered>; accessed 19 February 2014.
- ⁷⁸ Jan Kubik, *The Power of Symbols Against the Symbols of Power: The Rise of Solidarity and the Fall of State Socialism in Poland* (University Park, PA: Penn State University Press, 1994), 153.
- ⁷⁹ Kubik, *The Power of Symbols*, 153–54.
- ⁸⁰ Bernhard, *Origins of Democratization in Poland*, 64.
- ⁸¹ Michnik, *Letters from Freedom*, 53. On Michnik's dissident writings and political ideas, see Barbara J. Falk, *The Dilemmas of Dissidence in East-Central Europe: Citizen Intellectuals and Philosopher Kings* (Budapest: Central European University Press, 2003), 165–84.
- ⁸² Michnik, *Letters from Freedom*, 53.
- ⁸³ Ibid.
- ⁸⁴ For more on the history of the KOR, see the classic work by Jan Józef Lipski, *KOR: A History of the Workers' Defense Committee in Poland, 1976–1981*, translated by Olga Amsterdamska and Gene M. More (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1985). See also Falk, *The Dilemmas of Dissidence in East-Central Europe*, 35–40. For Michnik's own account see his *Letters from Freedom*, 56–58.

- 85 Timothy Garton Ash, *The Polish Revolution: Solidarity*, revised and updated edition (London: Granta Books, 1991), 26–27.
- 86 Garton Ash, *The Polish Revolution*, 27.
- 87 Mason, *Public Opinion and Political Change*, 57.
- 88 Crampton, *Eastern Europe*, 367.
- 89 Mason, *Public Opinion and Political Change*, 90.
- 90 See the complete list of demands in Staniszkis, *Poland's Self-Limiting Revolution*, 43–45.
- 91 Ibid., 6.
- 92 Laba, *The Roots of Solidarity*, 99.
- 93 See Fig. 1. Poland's Crisis and East European Regimes: Summary of structural, conjunctural and specific factors, in Nørgaard and Sampson, "Poland's Crisis," 784.
- 94 Mason, *Public Opinion and Political Change*, 29.
- 95 Crampton, *Eastern Europe*, 365.
- 96 Kennedy, *Professionals, Power and Solidarity*, 62.
- 97 Staniszkis, *Poland's Self-Limiting Revolution*, 7–8.
- 98 Alain Touraine, François Dubet, Michel Wieviorka and Jan Strzelecki, *Solidarity. The Analysis of a Social Movement: Poland 1980–1981* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983), 179.
- 99 Kennedy, *Professionals, Power and Solidarity*, 56.
- 100 In the Silesian coalmining basin the strikes lasted until 28 December 1981 (the Piast coalmine). A tragic episode, known as the Wujek massacre, took place on 17 December 1981 at the Wujek coalmine, where intervention troops fired at the miners and killed nine of them. Swidlicki, *Political Trials in Poland*, 71.
- 101 Under Martial Law, between 13 December 1981 and 23 December 1982, the authorities made extensive use of the instrument of internment in "isolation centers," solely on the basis of "legitimate grounds for suspicion." Ibid., 27.
- 102 Ibid., 126–28 and 139–41.
- 103 Ibid., 13–14.
- 104 Quoted in Swidlicki, *Political Trials in Poland*, 163.
- 105 Pedro Ramet, *Cross and Commissar: The Politics of Religion in Eastern Europe and the USSR* (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 1987), 193.
- 106 Korbonski, "Dissent in Poland, 1956–1976," in Leftwich Curry, ed., *Dissent in Eastern Europe*, 32.
- 107 Ramet, *Cross and Commissar*, 193–94.
- 108 Kramer, *The Kuklinski Files and the Polish Crisis of 1980–1981*, 27.

- 109 Swidlicki, *Political Trials in Poland*, 304–305.
- 110 High-ranking Soviet officials, such as Marshal Viktor Kulikov – chief of the General Staff of the Soviet Armed Forces and commander-in-chief of the WTO forces – displayed a conspicuous "hatred for the pope," which alongside various pieces of circumstantial evidence suggested a Soviet involvement in the attempted assassination of Pope John Paul II on 13 May 1981. For more on this, see Kramer, *The Kuklinski Files and the Polish Crisis of 1980–1981*, 27–28.
- 111 Swidlicki, *Political Trials in Poland*, 299.
- 112 Davies, *Heart of Europe*, 53.
- 113 Michnik, *Letters from Freedom*, 141–42.
- 114 Taras, *Politics in Poland*, 375–76.
- 115 Ibid., 377.
- 116 Matthew J. Ouimet, *The Rise and Fall of the Brezhnev Doctrine in Soviet Foreign Policy* (Chapel Hill, NC: The University of North Carolina Press, 2003), 5.

Chapter Three: Hungary

- 1 With regard to the seven economic "macrocycles" in the Hungarian post-World War II economy, this author draws on the argument developed in Tőkés, *Hungary's Negotiated Revolution*, 88–89.
- 2 László Kontler, *Millennium in Central Europe: A History of Hungary* (Budapest: Atlantisz, 1999), 387.
- 3 For a general assessment of the performance of the Hungarian economy under central planning, see György Enyedi and György Ránki, "Experiences of National Planning in Hungary," in Miguel Urrutia and Setsuko Yukawa, eds., *Development Planning in Mixed Economies* (Tokio: The United Nations University, 1988), 311–58.
- 4 Kontler, *A History of Hungary*, 406. See also the discussion on the development, beginning in 1949, of the new "iron and steel" town of Dunapentele in Ivan T. Berend, *Case Studies on Modern European Economy: Entrepreneurs, Inventions, Institutions* (Milton Park, UK: Routledge, 2013), 206; subsequently, the town was renamed Sztálinváros and in 1961 received its present day name of Dunaújváros.
- 5 Aldcroft and Morewood, *Economic Change in Eastern Europe*, 108.
- 6 Tőkés, *Hungary's Negotiated Revolution*, 86.

- ⁷ See Table 2.2: Socialist industrialization programs: Resource commitments by seven states, in Tóké, *Hungary's Negotiated Revolution*, 87.
- ⁸ Kontler, *A History of Hungary*, 394.
- ⁹ Nagy casted serious doubts on the policy of forced collectivization and thus, upon his coming to power, he initiated a process of partial de-collectivization. Nagy's removal from office in 1955 put an end to the reformist course. Pavel Tigríd, "Imré Nagy, le déviationniste malgré lui," in idem, *Amère Révolution* (Paris: Éditions Albin Michel, 1977), 86–88.
- ¹⁰ Enyedi and Ránki, "Experiences of National Planning in Hungary," 324–25.
- ¹¹ Richard F. Staar, *Communist Regimes in Eastern Europe*, 4th ed. (Stanford, CA: Hoover Institution Press, 1982), 146.
- ¹² Tóké, *Hungary's Negotiated Revolution*, 91.
- ¹³ For an analysis of the collectivization process in Hungary, see Nigel Swain, *Collectivisation in Hungary: Background Notes*, Working Paper No. 3, Rural Transition Series (University of Liverpool: Centre for Central and Eastern European Studies, n.d.); Internet: www.liv.ac.uk/history/research/cee_pdfs/WPO3v2.pdf; accessed 11 April 2009. See also Tóké, *Hungary's Negotiated Revolution*, 43.
- ¹⁴ Kornai, *Paying the Bill for Goulash-Communism*, 16–17.
- ¹⁵ See Table 2.6: Average annual rate of growth in national income and in investment, CMEA states, 1951–65, in Tóké, *Hungary's Negotiated Revolution*, 93.
- ¹⁶ Tóké, *Hungary's Negotiated Revolution*, 94–95.
- ¹⁷ For more on the objectives of the Third FYP, see Alan Brown, "Hungary: Perspectives up to 1970," and R. D. Portes, "The Hungarian Economy 1966–70," in Peter J. D. Wiles, ed., *The Prediction of Communist Economic Performance* (London: Cambridge University Press, 1971), 175–200 and, respectively, 201–12.
- ¹⁸ Kornai, *Paying the Bill for Goulash-Communism*, 19.
- ¹⁹ Tóké, *Hungary's Negotiated Revolution*, 82.
- ²⁰ For an in-depth analysis of economic planning in Hungary from the inception of the NEM to the year 1987, see Enyedi and Ránki, "Experiences of National Planning in Hungary," 330–57.
- ²¹ Tóké, *Hungary's Negotiated Revolution*, 96, 109 and 115.
- ²² Ibid., 102–105.
- ²³ Regarding the IMF short-term loan received by Hungary in 1982, see Kontler, *A History of Hungary*, 457.

- ²⁴ Tóké, *Hungary's Negotiated Revolution*, 273.
- ²⁵ Kornai, *Paying the Bill for Goulash-Communism*, 41–42.
- ²⁶ Kontler, *A History of Hungary*, 390.
- ²⁷ István Rév, *Retroactive Justice: Prehistory of Post-Communism* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2005), 36.
- ²⁸ For more on the debates concerning Nagy's political career and ideological commitments, see János M. Rainer, "Imre Nagy, Life and Image," *The Hungarian Quarterly* (Budapest), No. 183 (2006), 62–74; Internet, available at www.hungarianquarterly.com/no183/1.html; accessed 11 April 2009.
- ²⁹ Tóké, *Hungary's Negotiated Revolution*, 7.
- ³⁰ Kornai, *Paying the Bill for Goulash-Communism*, 131.
- ³¹ Kontler, *A History of Hungary*, 458.
- ³² For more on the tacit deal, see George Schöpflin, *Politics in Eastern Europe, 1945–1992* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1993), esp. 149–51.
- ³³ Kontler, *A History of Hungary*, 460.
- ³⁴ Kis, "Between Reform and Revolution," 51.
- ³⁵ Máté Szabó, "Hungary," in Pollack and Wielgoths, eds., *Dissent and Opposition in Communist Eastern Europe*, 60.
- ³⁶ For more on the Gabčíkovo-Nagymaros case, see Miklós Sukösd, "The Gabčíkovo-Nagymaros Dam: Social, Political and Cultural Conflicts," in Agni Vlavianos-Arvanitis and Jan Morovic, eds., *Biopolitics: The Bio-Environment*; Volume 6: *Danube River Bonds* (Athens: Biopolitics International Organisation, 1998); Internet: <http://www.biopolitics.gr/HTML/PUBS/VOL6/HTML/sukosd.htm>; accessed 12 April 2009. See also Szabó, "Hungary," 61–62 and Stokes, *The Walls Came Tumbling Down*, 94–95.
- ³⁷ Dan Ionescu, "Chronology of Hungarian Protests at Romanian Rural Resettlement Plans," Radio Free Europe Research, *RAD Background Report/129 (Eastern Europe)*, 9 July 1988: 6; OSA/Digital Archive/Background Reports; Internet: http://osaarchivum.org/files/holdings/300/8/3/text_da/37-5-48.shtml; accessed 12 April 2009.
- ³⁸ Tóké, *Hungary's Negotiated Revolution*, 9.
- ³⁹ Ivan T. Berend, *Decades of Crisis: Central and Eastern Europe before World War II* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1998), 127–29.
- ⁴⁰ György Litván, "A Forty-Year Perspective on 1956," in *The Journal of Communist Studies and Transition Politics* (London), Vol. 13, No. 2 (June 1997), 21–22.
- ⁴¹ Litván, "A Forty-Year Perspective on 1956," 19–20.

- ⁴² Paul Lendvai, *Hungary: The Art of Survival* (London: I. B. Tauris & Co., 1988), 47.
- ⁴³ Nagy announced the neutrality of Hungary via a radio broadcast in the evening of 1 November 1956. See Csaba Békés, Malcolm Byrne and János M. Rainer, eds., *The 1956 Hungarian Revolution: A History in Documents* (Budapest: Central European University Press, 2002), XXXIV and XLI.
- ⁴⁴ Peter Kenez, *Hungary from the Nazis to the Soviets: The Establishment of the Communist Regime in Hungary, 1944–1948* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 22.
- ⁴⁵ Kontler, *A History of Hungary*, 392. See also Bennett Kovrig, “Hungary,” in Teresa Rakowska-Harmstone, ed., *Communism in Eastern Europe*, 2nd ed. (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 1984), 88.
- ⁴⁶ Kovrig, “Hungary,” 88.
- ⁴⁷ Ibid., 89.
- ⁴⁸ For more on this see Martin McCauley, *The Origins of the Cold War 1941–1949*, 3rd ed. (Harlow, UK: Pearson Longman, 2003), 88.
- ⁴⁹ Kontler, *A History of Hungary*, 396.
- ⁵⁰ Kovrig, “Hungary,” 90.
- ⁵¹ For more on the liquidation of the multi-party system in Hungary, see Elemér Hankiss, “The Loss of Responsibility,” in Ian Maclean, Alan Montefiore and Peter Winch, eds., *The Political Responsibility of Intellectuals* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990), 31.
- ⁵² Hankiss, “The Loss of Responsibility,” 31. See also Kontler, *A History of Hungary*, 408–409, and Kovrig, “Hungary,” 90.
- ⁵³ János M. Rainer, “Intersecting Lives: Imre Nagy and János Kádár in 1956,” in *Hungarian Studies: A Journal of the International Association for Hungarian Studies* (Budapest), Vol. 20, No. 2 (2006), 200.
- ⁵⁴ Ibid., 201.
- ⁵⁵ Litván, “A Forty-Year Perspective on 1956,” 19.
- ⁵⁶ For more on this see Békés, Byrne, and Rainer, eds., “Chronology of Events,” XXXIV–XXXVI, and Tóké, *Hungary’s Negotiated Revolution*, 17–18.
- ⁵⁷ Békés, Byrne, and Rainer, eds., “Chronology of Events,” XXXIV–XXXV.
- ⁵⁸ For additional information regarding the storming of the Hungarian Public Radio building, see Jenő Györkei and Miklós Horváth, “Additional Data on the History of the Soviet Military Occupation,” in idem, eds., *Soviet Military Intervention in Hungary–1956*,

- translated by Emma Roper Evans (Budapest: Central European University Press, 1999), 15–19; originally published in 1996.
- ⁵⁹ György Litván, ed., *The Hungarian Revolution of 1956: Reform, Revolt and Repression 1953–1963* (London: Longman, 1996), 58.
- ⁶⁰ Tóké, *Hungary’s Negotiated Revolution*, 17.
- ⁶¹ Békés, Byrne, and Rainer, eds., *The 1956 Hungarian Revolution*, XLI.
- ⁶² According to the report sent by Andropov to Moscow, he was summoned by Nagy to the Council of Ministers where the Hungarian prime minister “in fairly angry tones had informed those present that he had already asked for information from the Soviet Embassy that morning concerning the fact that Soviet troops had crossed the Hungarian border and were heading for the center of the country.” Andropov’s report further describes the reaction of Prime Minister Nagy to his incomplete answer: “Given that the Soviet government has not stopped the Soviet troop march and has not given a satisfactory explanation for this step, he [Nagy] proposes that Hungary leave the Warsaw Pact, reinforcing the morning decree to declare Hungary a neutral country, and has turned to the UN so that the four great powers will guarantee the country’s neutrality.” Quoted in Györkei and Horváth, “Additional Data,” 78.
- ⁶³ Györkei and Horváth, “Additional Data,” 114.
- ⁶⁴ Miklós Molnár, *A Concise History of Hungary*, translated by Anna Magyar (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), 323–28; originally published in 1996.
- ⁶⁵ For instance, Tóké has argued that during his period in power, i.e., November 1956–May 1988, the leadership style adopted by Kádár changed constantly in accordance with the external conjuncture and the internal constraints. The same author has identified the following four “leadership roles” played by Kádár over four successive periods from his coming to power in the aftermath of the defeated 1956 revolution up to his ousting from power in 1988: (1) “reluctant hostage,” 1956–63; (2) “risk-taking reformer,” 1963–71; (3) “good king,” 1972–80; and (4) “enfeebled autarch,” 1981–88. Tóké, *Hungary’s Negotiated Revolution*, 22–23.
- ⁶⁶ Békés, Byrne, and Rainer, eds., *The 1956 Hungarian Revolution*, XLIX.
- ⁶⁷ Figures provided in Békés, Byrne, and Rainer, eds., *The 1956 Hungarian Revolution*, 375.

- ⁶⁸ For more on the execution of Nagy, see Karl P. Benziger, *Imre Nagy, Martyr of the Nation: Contested History, Legitimacy, and Popular Memory in Hungary* (Lanham, MD: Lexington Books, 2008), 72. See also Békés, Byrne, and Rainer, eds., *The 1956 Hungarian Revolution*, XLIX.
- ⁶⁹ The assertion belongs to Ágnes Ságvári, a former staff member of the CC of the HSWP; quoted in Tóké, *Hungary's Negotiated Revolution*, 38.
- ⁷⁰ Szabó, "Hungary," 55.
- ⁷¹ Martin Malia, *The Soviet Tragedy: A History of Socialism in Russia, 1917–1991* (New York: The Free Press, 1994), 340.
- ⁷² Tóké, *Hungary's Negotiated Revolution*, 44–46.
- ⁷³ Kontler, *A History of Hungary*, 434.
- ⁷⁴ Szabó, "Hungary," 55.
- ⁷⁵ Malia, *The Soviet Tragedy*, 350.
- ⁷⁶ Tóké, *Hungary's Negotiated Revolution*, 54.
- ⁷⁷ Kontler, *A History of Hungary*, 456–57 and Tóké, *Hungary's Negotiated Revolution*, 115.
- ⁷⁸ Regarding the IMF short-term loan received by Hungary in 1982 see Kontler, *A History of Hungary*, 457.
- ⁷⁹ Molnár, *A Concise History of Hungary*, 333.
- ⁸⁰ Tóké, *Hungary's Negotiated Revolution*, 284–85.
- ⁸¹ The five prominent figures of the 1956 revolution were: Imre Nagy (1896–1958), Miklós Gimes (1917–58), Géza Losonczy (1917–57), Pál Maléter (1917–58) and József Szilágyi (1917–58). Apart from Losonczy, who died in prison in 1957 while on hunger strike, all the others were executed in 1958, during the post-1956 wave of repression. A sixth coffin was added in memory of the "unknown freedom fighter." For a contemporary account of the reburial see, for instance, Charles T. Powers, "Hungary Gives Patriot's Burial to Martyr Nagy," *Los Angeles Times* (17 June 1989); Internet: http://articles.latimes.com/1989-06-17/news/mn-1587_1_imre-nagy-premier-miklos-nemeth-parliament-speaker-matyas-szuross; accessed 9 March 2014.
- ⁸² Rév, *Retroactive Justice*, 30.
- ⁸³ Quoted in Tóké, *Hungary's Negotiated Revolution*, 313.
- ⁸⁴ Tóké, *Hungary's Negotiated Revolution*, 299.
- ⁸⁵ Scholarly literature points towards a number of twenty-one political organizations of the opposition active in Hungary by the end of 1988. Ibid., 308.

- ⁸⁶ Ibid., 328.
- ⁸⁷ For the complete text of the 18 September 1989 National Roundtable agreement, see Tóké, *Hungary's Negotiated Revolution*, 357–60. See also "Appendix 1. The Structure of the National Roundtable Talks in Hungary, 1989" and "Appendix 2. Major Agreements and Disagreements between the MSZMP and the Opposition Roundtable on Political Issues," in Bozóki, ed., *The Roundtable Talks of 1989*, xxxii–xxxiv.
- ⁸⁸ Kis, "Between Reform and Revolution," 44.
- ⁸⁹ András Bozóki and Gergely Karácsony, "The Making of a Political Elite: Participants in the Hungarian Roundtable Talks of 1989," in Bozóki, ed., *The Roundtable Talks of 1989*, 72–92.
- ⁹⁰ For the constituent parts of the ORT see note 29 in Zoltán Ripp, "Unity and Division: The Opposition Roundtable and Its Relationship to the Communist Party," in Bozóki, ed., *The Roundtable Talks of 1989*, 37.
- ⁹¹ Szabó, "Hungary," 58.
- ⁹² Ibid.
- ⁹³ Kontler, *A History of Hungary*, 462–63 and Tóké, *Hungary's Negotiated Revolution*, 196–97.
- ⁹⁴ Bozóki and Karácsony, "Participants in the Hungarian Roundtable Talks of 1989," 86–87.
- ⁹⁵ Kontler, *A History of Hungary*, 464.
- ⁹⁶ Falk, *The Dilemmas of Dissidence in East-Central Europe*, 281.
- ⁹⁷ Bozóki and Karácsony, "Participants in the Hungarian Roundtable Talks of 1989," 90–91.
- ⁹⁸ Kontler, *A History of Hungary*, 464.
- ⁹⁹ Quoted in Tóké, *Hungary's Negotiated Revolution*, 330.
- ¹⁰⁰ Bozóki and Karácsony, "Participants in the Hungarian Roundtable Talks of 1989," 74–75.
- ¹⁰¹ Ibid., 76.
- ¹⁰² Ibid., 77.
- ¹⁰³ Tóké, *Hungary's Negotiated Revolution*, 311.
- ¹⁰⁴ See Alois Mock (links), *Österreichs Außenminister und sein ungarischer Amtskollege Gyula Horn beim Durchtrennen des Eisernen Vorhanges am 27. Juni 1989*; Document type: Photo; Source: APA-IMAGES/APA, 27/06/1989. Black and White; Internet: <http://www.ena.lu/alois-mock-gyula-horn-open-iron-curtain-austria-hungary-27-june-1989-020705913.html>; accessed 16 April 2009.

Chapter Four: East Germany

- ¹ As Naimark puts it: "None of the Allies had much affection for the Germans, and the occupation authorities treated local populations with hostility and disdain." See Norman M. Naimark, *The Russians in Germany: A History of the Soviet Zone of Occupation, 1945–1949* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1997), 1; originally published in 1995.
- ² Anthony Glees, *Reinventing Germany: German Political Development Since 1945* (Oxford: Berg, 1996), xxviii.
- ³ See Table 62 – Ranking of Countries by Eastern Bloc Economists, 1971–90 in Janos, *East Central Europe in the Modern World*, 354. See also Brus, *Histoire économique de l'Europe de l'Est*, 322.
- ⁴ Jochen Laufer, "From Dismantling to Currency Reform: External Origins of the Dictatorship, 1943–1948," in Jarausch, ed., *Dictatorship as Experience*, 76.
- ⁵ Aldcroft and Morewood, *Economic Change in Eastern Europe*, 101.
- ⁶ Laufer, "External Origins of the Dictatorship," 77–78.
- ⁷ For more on the Soviet influence on the establishment of the centrally planned economy in the GDR, see Burghard Ciesla, "Winner Takes All: The Soviet Union and the Beginning of Central Planning in Eastern Germany, 1945–1949," in Hartmut Berghoff and Uta Andrea Balbier, eds., *The East German Economy, 1945–2010: Falling Behind or Catching Up?* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2013), 70–73.
- ⁸ "Excerpt from an Explanation of the Two-Year Plan for 1949–1950 (30 June 1948)," translated by Adam Blauhut, *German History in Documents and Images (GHDI)*, Volume 8: *Occupation and the Emergence of Two States, 1945–1961*; Internet, http://germanhistorydocs.ghi-dc.org/sub_document.cfm?document_id=2998; accessed 18 April 2009; originally published in *Dokumente der Sozialistischen Einheitspartei Deutschlands*, vol. II (Berlin, 1951), 22–25.
- ⁹ Among the industrial facilities expropriated, the document mentioned: 38 brown coal mines; 59 companies owned by the electronics groups Siemens and AEG; 38 factories belonging to Continental Gas AG; 14 enterprises of the Rütgers group; 9 Mannesmann factories; 7 chemical factories owned by Henkel AG, etc. With regard to the land reform, it was stated that 6,837 farms run by Junkers and large landowners were "dispossessed" of

2,472,000 hectares of land. By adding the land expropriated from Nazis and war criminals, as well as some public possessions, the amount of land redistributed amounted to 3,147,000 hectares. All in all, it was claimed that the total number of beneficiaries of the land reform amounted to 514,730 individuals. See "Excerpt from an Explanation of the Two-Year Plan for 1949–1950 (30 June 1948)."

- ¹⁰ "The Five-Year Plan for 1951–1955 (1950)," translated by Adam Blauhut, *GHDI*, Vol. 8; Internet, http://germanhistorydocs.ghi-dc.org/sub_document.cfm?document_id=2996; accessed 18 April 2009; originally published in *Protokoll des III. Parteitages der SED (20.–24. Juli 1950)* (Berlin, 1951), 276, 278–80 and 296–97.
- ¹¹ Peter Hübner, "Stagnation or Change? Transformations of the Workplace in the GDR," in Jarausch, ed., *Dictatorship as Experience*, 293.
- ¹² Ibid.
- ¹³ Wolle, *DDR*, 30.
- ¹⁴ André Steiner, *Von Plan zu Plan: Eine Wirtschaftsgeschichte der DDR* (Berlin: Aufbau Verlagsgruppe, 2007), 87. See also Hagen Schulze, *Germany: A New History*, translated by Deborah Lucas Schneider (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1998), 314.
- ¹⁵ Mark Allinson, *Politics and Popular Opinion in East Germany 1945–68* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2000), 55–56.
- ¹⁶ Quoted in Karl C. Thalheim, "The Development of the East German Economy in the Framework of the Soviet Bloc," in Kurt London, ed., *Eastern Europe in Transition* (Baltimore, MD: The Johns Hopkins Press, 1966), 148. See also Wolle, *DDR*, 39.
- ¹⁷ Monika Kaiser, "Reforming Socialism? The Changing of the Guard from Ulbricht to Honecker during the 1960s," in Jarausch, ed., *Dictatorship as Experience*, 327.
- ¹⁸ Mary Fulbrook, *The People's State: East German Society from Hitler to Honecker* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2005), 37–38.
- ¹⁹ "Walter Ulbricht on the 'New Economic System' of the GDR, 16 December 1965," translated by Allison Brown, *GHDI*, Vol. 8; Internet; http://germanhistorydocs.ghi-dc.org/docpage.cfm?docpage_id=1696; accessed 16 November 2013; originally published in Walter Ulbricht, *Zum Neuen Ökonomischen System der Planung und Leitung* (Berlin, 1966), 668–76.
- ²⁰ Steiner, *Von Plan zu Plan*, 158.

- ²¹ Hans-Ulrich Wehler, *Deutsche Gesellschaftsgeschichte, 1949–1990* (Munich: Verlag C. H. Beck, 2008), 95.
- ²² Kaiser, “Reforming Socialism,” 337.
- ²³ On the shift of objective from “catch up and overtake” to “overtake without catching up,” see Raymond G. Stokes, “Von Trabbis und Acetylen – die Technikentwicklung,” in André Steiner, ed., *Überholen ohne einzuholen: Die DDR-Wirtschaft als Fußnote der deutschen Geschichte?* (Berlin: Christoph Links Verlag, 2006), 114–15.
- ²⁴ Steiner, *Von Plan zu Plan*, 191–92.
- ²⁵ “Joint Resolution of the Central Committee of the SED, the national executive board of the Free German Trade Union Federation and the Council of Ministers of the GDR on sociopolitical measures in carrying out the main tasks of the Five-Year Plan resolved at the Eighth Party Congress of the SED, 28 April 1972,” translated by Allison Brown, *GHDI*, Vol. 8; Internet; http://germanhistorydocs.ghi-dc.org/sub_document.cfm?document_id=904%20; accessed 17 November 2013; originally published as: “Gemeinsamer Beschluß des Zentralkomitees der SED, des Bundesvorstandes des FDGB und des Ministerrates der DDR über sozialpolitische Maßnahmen in Durchführung der auf dem VIII. Parteitag der SED beschlossenen Hauptaufgabe des Fünfjahrplanes, 28. April 1972,” reprinted in Günter Benser, ed., *Dokumente zur Geschichte der SED*, vol. 3, 1971–1986 (Berlin, 1986), 73–74.
- ²⁶ Klaus Schroeder, *Der SED-Staat: Partei, Staat und Gesellschaft 1949–1990* (Munich: Propyläen Taschenbuch, 2000), 270.
- ²⁷ Wehler, *Deutsche Gesellschaftsgeschichte*, 97–98.
- ²⁸ For more on the environmental problems encountered in GDR, especially in the highly industrialized areas, see Eckard Reh binder, “Rethinking Environmental Policy,” in Gordon Smith, William E. Paterson, Peter H. Merkl and Stephen Padgett, eds., *Developments in German Politics* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1992), 232–34.
- ²⁹ Steffen Kröhnert and Samuel Skipper, “Demographic Development in Eastern Germany,” publication of the Berlin-Institut für Bevölkerung und Entwicklung; Internet; <http://www.berlin-institut.org/online-handbookdemography/east-germany.html>; accessed 24 November 2013.
- ³⁰ *Ibid.*, 3–4.

- ³¹ Leslie Lipschitz and Donogh McDonald, eds., *German Unification: Economic Issues* (Washington, D.C.: International Monetary Fund, 1990), xv.
- ³² In this respect, the situation in East Germany appears to be consistent with the theory of relative deprivation. As Coleman observed, this refers to “generating a subjective perspective that gives rise to frustration in the presence of improvement.” See James S. Coleman, *Foundations of Social Theory* (Cambridge, MA: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1990), 475–77.
- ³³ Martin Sabrow, “Dictatorship as Discourse: Cultural Perspectives on SED Legitimacy,” in Jarausch, ed., *Dictatorship as Experience*, 196.
- ³⁴ David G. Coleman, “Eisenhower and the Berlin Problem, 1953–1954,” *Journal of Cold War Studies*, Vol. 2, No. 1 (Winter 2000), 17.
- ³⁵ The food aid scheme was a propaganda success for the FRG and US, as well as a means of providing some relief to the East German citizens; all in all, the number of packages of food distributed exceeded 5.5 million. See Document No. 87: “Conclusions from Reports of the SED District Leaderships, 8 August 1953,” in Christian F. Ostermann, ed., *Uprising in East Germany, 1953: The Cold War, the German Question, and the First Major Upheaval Behind the Iron Curtain* (Budapest: Central European University Press, 2001), 364.
- ³⁶ Fulbrook, *The People’s State*, 29–33.
- ³⁷ Peter H. Merkl, “A New German Identity,” in Smith et al., eds., *Developments in German Politics*, 330.
- ³⁸ Glees, *Reinventing Germany*, 154–57. As Glees notes, Brandt’s name “will always be indelibly associated with *Ostpolitik*, the policy of building a relationship with the communist states of eastern and central Europe, in particular with the Soviet Union and the GDR.” *Ibid.*, 169.
- ³⁹ Schroeder, *Der SED-Staat*, 620.
- ⁴⁰ Fulbrook, *The People’s State*, 39.
- ⁴¹ Quoted in Glees, *Reinventing Germany*, xxvii.
- ⁴² With regard to the significance of the “Gorbachev factor” in determining the fall of the communist regime in East Germany, Ohse stated: “Moscow’s renunciation of the Brezhnev Doctrine under Mikhail Gorbachev was the most important precondition for the success of the mass protests in 1989.” See Marc-Dietrich Ohse,

- “German Democratic Republic,” in Pollack and Wielgoths, eds., *Dissent and Opposition in Communist Eastern Europe*, 88.
- ⁴³ Gorbachev and Mlynář, *Conversations with Gorbachev*, 85.
- ⁴⁴ Archie Brown, *The Gorbachev Factor* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996), 249 and 376.
- ⁴⁵ Figures provided in William E. Patterson and Gordon Smith, “German Unity,” in Smith et al., eds., *Developments in German Politics*, 13.
- ⁴⁶ Schroeder, *Der SED-Staat*, 285.
- ⁴⁷ For an assessment of Ulbricht’s initiatives aimed at reaching an understanding between the FRG and the GDR, see Kaiser, “Reforming Socialism,” 334–35. See also Heinrich August Winkler, *Der lange Weg nach Westen: Deutsche Geschichte vom “Dritten Reich” bis zur Wiedervereinigung*, vol. 2, 6th ed. (Munich: Verlag C. H. Beck, 2005), 290–91.
- ⁴⁸ Winkler, *Deutsche Geschichte*, 124–25.
- ⁴⁹ Naimark, *The Russians in Germany*, 11.
- ⁵⁰ David Pike, *The Politics of Culture in Soviet-Occupied Germany, 1945–1949* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1992), 4.
- ⁵¹ “Proclamation by the Central Committee of the German Communist Party (11 June 1945)” (Aufruf des Zentralkomitees vom 11. Juni 1945), translated by Thomas Dunlap, *GHDI*, Vol. 8; Internet; http://germanhistorydocs.ghi-dc.org/sub_document.cfm?document_id=2992; accessed 18 April 2009.
- ⁵² The SPD members who opposed the merger were harassed and in certain cases disappeared for ever. A general consultation of SPD members on the issue of the merger did not take place except for a vote taken in West Berlin, and the result was that 82 percent of the SPD members refused the unification with KPD. Schulze, *Germany*, 292. West German sources spoke of some 20,000 SPD members who were “disciplined,” imprisoned or even killed during the period December 1945–April 1946. Statement of April 1961 by Erich Ollenhauer, chairman of the West German SPD, quoted in Martin McCauley, “East Germany,” in idem, ed., *Communist Power in Europe 1944–1949* (London: Macmillan, 1977), 65.
- ⁵³ The French occupation zone joined the economic “Bizone” only on 8 April 1949, when an economic “Trizone” came into being in the territories occupied by the Western Allies and thus preceded the establishment of West Germany. Schulze, *Germany*, 294.

- ⁵⁴ Peter Grieder, *The East German Leadership, 1946–73: Conflict and Crisis* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1999), 59.
- ⁵⁵ Grieder, *The East German Leadership*, 84 and 87–88.
- ⁵⁶ According to FRG statistics, the number of illegal immigrants from GDR rose from 182,393 in 1952 to 331,390 in 1953. See Bernd Eisenfeld, “Flucht und Ausreise – Macht und Ohnmacht,” in Eberhard Kuhrt, Hannsjörg F. Buck and Gunter Holzweißig, eds., *Opposition in der DDR von den 70er Jahren bis zum Zusammenbruch der SED-Herrschaft* (Opladen: Leske+Budrich, 1999), 397.
- ⁵⁷ See the East German Decree of 13 August 1961 in Daniels, ed., *A Documentary History of Communism and the World*, 204–206; for the passages quoted see p. 205.
- ⁵⁸ As Schulze aptly puts it: “The bright lights of West Berlin exercised an almost magical attraction for the people of the German Democratic Republic, with the result that the stream of refugees across the border grew larger and larger.” Schulze, *Germany*, 316.
- ⁵⁹ See Table 1, *Die Flucht- und Ausreisebewegung aus der SBZ/DDR in die Westzonen/Bundesrepublik Deutschland*, in Eisenfeld, “Flucht und Ausreise,” 398.
- ⁶⁰ See the discussion in Kaiser, “Reforming Socialism,” in Jarausch, ed., *Dictatorship as Experience*, 330–31.
- ⁶¹ Quoted in Grieder, *The East German Leadership*, 180. See also Schroeder, *Der SED-Staat*, 208.
- ⁶² Jarausch, “Care and Coercion: The GDR as Welfare Dictatorship,” in idem, ed., *Dictatorship as Experience*, 60.
- ⁶³ Detlef Pollack, “Modernization and Modernization Blockages in GDR Society,” in Jarausch, ed., *Dictatorship as Experience*, 32.
- ⁶⁴ Wehler, *Deutsche Gesellschaftsgeschichte*, 93.
- ⁶⁵ Burghard Ciesla and Patrice G. Poutrus, “Food Supply in a Planned Economy: SED Nutrition Policy between Crisis Response and Popular Needs,” in Jarausch, ed., *Dictatorship as Experience*, 144.
- ⁶⁶ Pollack, “Modernization and Modernization Blockages in GDR Society,” 33–34.
- ⁶⁷ *Ibid.*, 38.
- ⁶⁸ For more on the issue of the risks taken by the East German citizens who attempted to flee to West Germany see, for instance, Eisenfeld, “Flucht und Ausreise – Macht und Ohnmacht,” 381–405.
- ⁶⁹ Glees, *Reinventing Germany*, 217.

- ⁷⁰ Arnd Bauerkämper and Jürgen Danyel, "The Pivotal Cadres: Leadership Styles and Self-Images of GDR-Elites," in Jarausch, ed., *Dictatorship as Experience*, 276–77.
- ⁷¹ Fulbrook, *The People's State*, 186–87. For a list of the key decision-makers in East Germany's economy, see Steiner, *Von Plan zu Plan*, 318–22. On the political biographies of Mielke and Mittag, see Helmut Müller-Enbergs, Jan Wielgoß, and Dieter Hoffmann, eds., *Wer war wer in der DDR? Ein biographisches Lexikon* (Berlin: Christoph Links Verlag, 2001), 579–80 and 584, respectively.
- ⁷² Schroeder, *Der SED-Staat*, 280.
- ⁷³ "Erich Honecker on the 40th Anniversary of the Founding of the GDR (6 October 1989)," *GHDI: One Germany in Europe (1989–2009)*; Internet; http://germanhistorydocs.ghi-dc.org/docpage.cfm?docpage_id=3223; accessed 21 December 2013; the English version originally published in Konrad H. Jarausch and Volker Gransow, eds., *Uniting Germany: Documents and Debates, 1944–1993*, translated by Allison Brown and Belinda Cooper (New York: Berghahn Books, 1994), 51–53.
- ⁷⁴ A photo taken during the official military parade on the Karl-Marx-Allee in East Berlin, on 7 October 1989, shows the Soviet leader Gorbachev, the GDR leader Honecker, Raisa Gorbacheva and the GDR prime minister Willi Stoph under a banner which reads "40 Years of the GDR." See "Military Parade Celebrating the 40th Anniversary of the GDR (7 October 1989)," *GHDI: One Germany in Europe (1989–2009)*; Internet; http://germanhistorydocs.ghi-dc.org/sub_image.cfm?image_id=3025; accessed 22 December 2013.
- ⁷⁵ On the political biography of Krenz, see Müller-Enbergs, Wielgoß, and Hoffmann, eds., *Wer war wer in der DDR*, 475.
- ⁷⁶ Schroeder, *Der SED-Staat*, 285–86.
- ⁷⁷ Wolf Lepenies, *The Seduction of Culture in German History* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2006), 172.
- ⁷⁸ Hirschman also examines the "exit" and "voice" options in the case of the citizens of former German Democratic Republic. See Albert O. Hirschman, *Exit, Voice, and Loyalty: Responses to Decline in Firms, Organizations, and States* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1970) and idem, "Exit, Voice, and the Fate of the German Democratic Republic: An Essay in Conceptual History," *World Politics*, Vol. 45, Issue 2 (January 1993), 173–202.
- ⁷⁹ See Table 1, *Die Flucht- und Ausreisebewegung aus der SBZ/DDR in die Westzonen/Bundesrepublik Deutschland*, in Eisenfeld, "Flucht und

- Ausreise," 397–99; the aforementioned table also provides a comparison between the figures put forward by the West German authorities and the figures provided by the MfS statistics, which are considerably lower.
- ⁸⁰ Ohse, "German Democratic Republic," in Pollack and Wielgoß, eds., *Dissent and Opposition in Communist Eastern Europe*, 75.
- ⁸¹ Joppke, *East German Dissidents and the Revolution of 1989*, 127–30.
- ⁸² On the political biographies of Harich and Janka, see Müller-Enbergs, Wielgoß, and Hoffmann, eds., *Wer war wer in der DDR*, 313–14 and 391, respectively.
- ⁸³ Ohse, "German Democratic Republic," 76.
- ⁸⁴ For more on Havemann's professional life and political biography, see Müller-Enbergs, Wielgoß, and Hoffmann, eds., *Wer war wer in der DDR*, 320.
- ⁸⁵ Ann Stamp Miller, *The Cultural Politics of the German Democratic Republic: The Voices of Wolf Biermann, Christa Wolf, and Heiner Müller* (Boca Raton, FL: Brown Walker Press, 2004), 76–78.
- ⁸⁶ For more on Biermann's professional life and dissident actions, see Müller-Enbergs, Wielgoß, and Hoffmann, eds., *Wer war wer in der DDR*, 79–80.
- ⁸⁷ Joppke, *East German Dissidents and the Revolution of 1989*, 67.
- ⁸⁸ Ibid., 82–83.
- ⁸⁹ Ohse, "German Democratic Republic," 77–78.
- ⁹⁰ Ibid., 79.
- ⁹¹ Among those arrested in the aftermath of the January 1988 demonstration were Bärbel Bohley, Werner Fischer, Ralf Hirsch, Freya Klier and Wolfgang Templin. See Joppke, *East German Dissidents and the Revolution of 1989*, 130–32. For biographical information on the aforementioned individuals, see Müller-Enbergs, Wielgoß, and Hoffmann, eds., *Wer war wer in der DDR*, 88–89, 213, 360–61, 438–39 and 844–45, respectively.
- ⁹² Joppke, *East German Dissidents and the Revolution of 1989*, 127–30.
- ⁹³ Peter E. Quint, *The Imperfect Union: Constitutional Structures of German Unification* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1997), 206.
- ⁹⁴ For the complete text of the founding document, entitled "Aufbruch 89 – Neues Forum," and the list of the initial thirty signatories, see Sebastian Pflugbeil, "Das Neue Forum" in Kuhrt, Buck, and Holzweißig, eds., *Opposition in der DDR*, 521–23; for an English version see "Typescript 'Aufbruch 89 – Neues Forum,'" Internet;

<http://www.east-for-the-record.de/en/extras/aufbruch-89-neues-forum.html>; accessed 22 December 2013.

⁹⁵ On the establishment of Democracy Now, see Ludwig Mehlhorn, “Demokratie jetzt,” in Kuhrt, Buck, and Holzweißig, eds., *Opposition in der DDR*, 573–97.

⁹⁶ On the founding of Democratic Awakening, see Ehrhart Neubert, “Der ‘Demokratische Aufbruch,’” in Kuhrt, Buck, and Holzweißig, eds., *Opposition in der DDR*, 537–71.

⁹⁷ For more on the preceding talks and the process of establishing the SDP, see Martin Gutzeit and Stephan Hilsberg, “Die SDP/SPD im Herbst 1989,” in Kuhrt, Buck, and Holzweißig, eds., *Opposition in der DDR*, 607–86.

⁹⁸ Joppke, *East German Dissidents and the Revolution of 1989*, 144.

⁹⁹ On the significance of the 1989 Monday demonstrations in Leipzig, see Susanne Lohmann, “The Dynamics of Informational Cascades: The Monday Demonstrations in Leipzig, East Germany, 1989–91,” *World Politics*, Vol. 47, No. 1 (October 1994), 42–101.

¹⁰⁰ See Table 4 in Uwe Schwabe, “Der Herbst ’89 in Zahlen – Demonstrationen und Kundgebungen vom August 1989 bis zum April 1990,” in Kuhrt, Buck, and Holzweißig, eds., *Opposition in der DDR*, 726.

¹⁰¹ Joppke, *East German Dissidents and the Revolution of 1989*, 155.

¹⁰² The East German Roundtable Talks consisted of sixteen meetings. For more on this see Ulrich K. Preuss, “The Roundtable Talks in the German Democratic Republic,” in Jon Elster, ed., *The Roundtable Talks and the Breakdown of Communism* (Chicago, IL: The University of Chicago Press, 1996), 99–134.

¹⁰³ The Alliance for Germany was composed of the Christian Democratic Union or the East German CDU (*Christlich-Demokratische Union*–CDU-Ost), German Social Union (*Deutsche Soziale Union*–DSU) and the Democratic Awakening (*Demokratischer Aufbruch*–DA). When the vote for the conservative Alliance for Germany, i.e., 48 percent, is added to that for the Social Democratic Party or the East German SPD (*Sozialdemokratische Partei Deutschlands*–SPD), i.e., 21.8 percent, and the liberal League of Free Democrats (*Bund Freier Demokraten*–BFD), i.e., 5.3 percent, the result is 75.1 percent. See Gordon Smith, “The ‘New’ Party System” in Smith et al., eds., *Developments in German Politics*, 85–87.

¹⁰⁴ Joppke, *East German Dissidents and the Revolution of 1989*, 176.

Chapter Five: Czechoslovakia

¹ John Michael Montias, “Economic Nationalism in Eastern Europe: Forty Years of Continuity and Change,” in Kurt London, ed., *Eastern Europe in Transition* (Baltimore, MD: The Johns Hopkins Press, 1966), 194.

² Martin Myant, *The Czechoslovak Economy 1948–1988: The Battle for Economic Reform* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989), 94.

³ Nationalization in Czechoslovakia was initiated through four decrees (Decrees Nos. 100–103 of 24 October 1945). See Alan R. Rado, “Czechoslovak Nationalization Decrees: Some International Aspects,” *The American Journal of International Law*, Vol. 41, No. 4 (October 1947), 795.

⁴ Adrian Smith, *Reconstructing the Regional Economy: Industrial Transformation and Regional Development in Slovakia* (Cheltenham, UK: Edward Elgar Publishing, 1998), 120. For instance, the Two-Year Plan saw the conversion of military production to civil production in a number of factories. Thus, it was expanded the production of domestic tractors, which were badly needed by the agriculture sector. See Myant, *The Czechoslovak Economy*, 45.

⁵ Joseph Rothschild, *Return to Diversity: A Political History of East Central Europe Since World War II* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1989), 95–96.

⁶ Myant, *The Czechoslovak Economy*, 42–43.

⁷ *Ibid.*, 14–15.

⁸ Statement by economist Jan Vaněk quoted in Montias, “Economic Nationalism in Eastern Europe,” 195.

⁹ The currency reform was accompanied by a price reform, which led to an increased cost of living. At the same time, large segments of the population saw their savings vanishing because of the unfavorable terms of money exchange. See Jan Adam, *Wage, Price and Taxation Policy in Czechoslovakia 1948–1970* (Berlin: Duncker & Humblot, 1974), 93–94.

¹⁰ Oldrich Tůma, “Czechoslovakia,” in Pollack and Wielgoths, eds., *Dissent and Opposition in Communist Eastern Europe*, 33.

¹¹ Myant, *The Czechoslovak Economy*, 67–68.

¹² *Ibid.*, 88–89.

¹³ For a discussion on the fulfillment of the Second FYP and the directives for the Third FYP, see Jan M. Michal, *Central Planning*

in *Czechoslovakia: Organization for Growth in a Mature Economy* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1960), 246–55.

¹⁴ See Table 4.3. Components of National Income in Terms of Production, 1960–1964 in Myant, *The Czechoslovak Economy*, 98.

¹⁵ According to Jan Rychlík, the Third FYP was “absolutely unrealistic.” For instance, the central planners envisaged an increase in production of 56 percent by the year 1965. The same author affirms that the failure of the Third FYP prompted the CPCz supreme leader Novotný to think about economic reforms. See Jan Rychlík, “The ‘Prague Spring’ and the Warsaw Pact Invasion as Seen from Prague,” in M. Mark Stolarik, ed., *The Prague Spring and the Warsaw Pact Invasion of Czechoslovakia, 1968: Forty Years Later* (Mundelein, IL: Bolchazy-Carducci Publishers, 2010), 32.

¹⁶ Michael Gamarnikow, *Economic Reforms in Eastern Europe* (Detroit, MI: Wayne State University Press, 1968), 48–49.

¹⁷ Myant, *The Czechoslovak Economy*, 161.

¹⁸ See Document No. 19: The CPCz CC Action Program, April 1968 (Excerpts), in Jaromír Navrátil et al., eds., *The Prague Spring 1968* (Budapest: Central European University Press, 1998), 94.

¹⁹ Brus, *Histoire économique de l'Europe de l'Est*, 273–74.

²⁰ Ibid., 275–76.

²¹ Data reproduced from Table 8.1. Economic stability in the 1970s as indicated by annual growth rates, in Myant, *The Czechoslovak Economy*, 187.

²² For a discussion on the meaning of the terms of “extensive” and “intensive” development, as employed at the time by the central planners in ECE, see Brus, *Histoire économique de l'Europe de l'Est*, 326.

²³ Brus, *Histoire économique de l'Europe de l'Est*, 322.

²⁴ Jim Prust et al., *The Czech and Slovak Federal Republic: An Economy in Transition* (Washington, D.C.: International Monetary Fund, 1990), 7–8.

²⁵ Prust et al., *The Czech and Slovak Federal Republic*, 10.

²⁶ For a comprehensive discussion on popular perceptions of the regime in communist Czechoslovakia in the post-1968 period see Bradley Abrams, “Buying Time: Consumption and Political Legitimization in Late Communist Czechoslovakia,” in Vladimir Tismăneanu and Bogdan C. Iacob, eds., *The End and the Beginning: The Revolutions of 1989 and the Resurgence of History* (Budapest: Central European University Press, 2012). Data cited is provided in Table 13 (1989):

“The assessment of the standard of living in Czechoslovakia for the periods 1980–1985 and 1985–1989” and Table 15 (1989): “Respondents’ ideas about the development of their own standard of living in the next five years,” at p. 416 and p. 417, respectively.

²⁷ For more on this see Abrams, “Buying Time,” 420.

²⁸ H. Gordon Skilling, *Communism National and International: Eastern Europe after Stalin* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1974), 84; originally published in 1964.

²⁹ For a discussion regarding the fall of Novotný and the coming to power of Dubček, see Rychlík, “The ‘Prague Spring’ and the Warsaw Pact Invasion as Seen from Prague,” 33–36.

³⁰ See Document No. 19: The CPCz CC Action Program, April 1968 (Excerpts), in Navrátil et al., eds., *The Prague Spring 1968*, 92–95.

³¹ Gorbachev and Mlynář, *Conversations with Gorbachev*, 64.

³² Ibid., 66.

³³ See Černík’s intervention in Document No. 14: Stenographic Account of the Dresden Meeting, March 23, 1968 (Excerpts) in Navrátil et al., eds., *The Prague Spring 1968*, 71–72.

³⁴ Václav Havel, *Disturbing the Peace: A Conversation with Karel Hviždala*, translated from Czech by Paul Wilson (New York: Vintage Books, 1991), 103.

³⁵ Ibid.

³⁶ Abrams, “Buying Time,” 400.

³⁷ With regard to the term of “new social contract,” Antonin J. Liehm states: “The notion of a new social contract in East and East Central Europe suggests that the population of those areas had ceded to the authorities its rights to free speech and assembly, its right to organize, and various other basic democratic rights in exchange for certain implicit guarantees. These include assured employment that, even if providing only mediocre wages permits a standard of living above the poverty level. Little real effort, personal involvement, or individual initiative is required.” Antonin J. Liehm, “The New Social Contract and the Parallel Polity,” in Leftwich Curry, ed., *Dissent in Eastern Europe*, 174. In his work on consumerism in former communist Czechoslovakia, Abrams employs the term “tacit social contract” and observes that after 1968 the power elites throughout ECE were left with a sole means of legitimizing their rule, i.e., the economic mode of legitimization: “What emerged in Marxism’s wake was an attempt by the regimes to rely on a primarily economic mode of legitimization, couched in what has been called by many

observers a 'tacit social contract.' In this, the regimes offered a reasonable and steadily rising standard of living and a social safety net in return for political quiescence." Abrams, "Buying Time," 400.

³⁸ Schöpflin, *Politics in Eastern Europe*, 149–51.

³⁹ Václav Havel, "The Power of the Powerless," in idem, *Living in Truth: Twenty-two Essays Published on the Occasion of the Award of the Erasmus Prize to Václav Havel*, edited by Jan Vladislav (London: Faber and Faber, 1989), 41; originally published in 1986.

⁴⁰ Havel, "The Power of the Powerless," 42.

⁴¹ Garton Ash, *The Magic Lantern*, 79–80.

⁴² As Garton Ash puts it: "In a real sense, Czechoslovakia was the beneficiary, and what happened there the culmination, of a ten-year-long Central European learning process – with Poland being the first, but paying the heaviest price." Garton Ash, *The Magic Lantern*, 127–28.

⁴³ See Havel, "New Year's Address" (January 1990) in idem, *Open Letters: Selected Writings 1965–1990*, selected and edited by Paul Wilson (New York: Vintage Books, 1992), 394.

⁴⁴ Jacques Rupnik, *Histoire du Parti communiste tchécoslovaque: Des origines à la prise du pouvoir* (Paris: Presses de la Fondation Nationale des Sciences Politiques, 1981), 52.

⁴⁵ Hugh LeCaine Agnew, *The Czechs and the Lands of the Bohemian Crown* (Stanford, CA: Hoover Institution Press, 2004), 177.

⁴⁶ Rupnik, *Histoire du Parti communiste tchécoslovaque*, 53.

⁴⁷ Ibid., 69–79.

⁴⁸ H. Gordon Skilling, "Stalinism and Czechoslovak Political Culture," in Robert C. Tucker, ed., *Stalinism: Essays in Historical Interpretation* (New York: W. W. Norton & Co., 1977), 261.

⁴⁹ Rupnik, *Histoire du Parti communiste tchécoslovaque*, 178. See also Bradley F. Abrams, *The Struggle for the Soul of the Nation: Czech Culture and the Rise of Communism* (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 2004), 12.

⁵⁰ Rupnik, *Histoire du Parti communiste tchécoslovaque*, 171.

⁵¹ Karel Kaplan, *The Communist Takeover in Czechoslovakia 1945–1948* (London: Hurst, 1987), 58. See also Rupnik, *Histoire du Parti communiste tchécoslovaque*, 175–76.

⁵² Gottwald occupied one of the five positions of deputy prime minister in the first (4 April–6 November 1945) and second (6 November 1945–2 July 1946) postwar governments. For details regarding the three Czechoslovak governments in power during the period 1945–

48, see "Czechoslovakia's Governments, 1945–1948," in Kaplan, *The Communist Takeover in Czechoslovakia*, xi–xii.

⁵³ On 9 July 1947, a Czechoslovak governmental delegation went to Moscow to discuss bilateral relations. On that occasion, Stalin told Gottwald that Czechoslovakia's acceptance of the Marshall Plan would be considered an act "hostile to the USSR." See Rupnik, *Histoire du Parti communiste tchécoslovaque*, 192–93.

⁵⁴ For a detailed account of the events on 13–25 February 1948, see Rupnik, *Histoire du Parti communiste tchécoslovaque*, 204–12.

⁵⁵ Regarding the Slánský show trial, see Igor Lukes, "The Rudolf Slánský Affair: New Evidence," in *Slavic Review*, Vol. 58, No. 1 (Spring 1999), 160–87. For an overview of the show trials in communist ECE, see George H. Hodos, *Show Trials: Stalinist Purges in Eastern Europe, 1948–1954* (New York: Praeger, 1987).

⁵⁶ Rothschild, *Return to Diversity*, 166–67.

⁵⁷ On the particular significance of the Fourth Congress of the Czechoslovak Writers' Union in June 1967, see Falk, *The Dilemmas of Dissidence in East-Central Europe*, 65–68.

⁵⁸ Rychlík, "The 'Prague Spring' and the Warsaw Pact Invasion as Seen from Prague," 33–36.

⁵⁹ See "The CPCz CC Action Program, April 1968 (Excerpts)," in Navrátil et al., eds., *The Prague Spring 1968*, 92–95.

⁶⁰ Tůma, "Czechoslovakia," 35.

⁶¹ On the 1968 Soviet-led invasion of Czechoslovakia and its consequences, see Stolarik, ed., *The Prague Spring and the Warsaw Pact Invasion of Czechoslovakia, 1968*.

⁶² For a discussion on the 1968 federalization of Czechoslovakia see Petr Pithart, "Towards a Shared Freedom, 1968–89," in Jiří Musil, ed., *The End of Czechoslovakia* (Budapest: Central European University Press, 1995), 204–208. See also Tůma, "Czechoslovakia," 36.

⁶³ Vít Šimral, "Czechoslovakia 1989 and Rational Choice Theory: A General Model of Regime Change," in *Politologický Časopis: Czech Journal of Political Science* 3 (2009), 241.

⁶⁴ Ibid., 244.

⁶⁵ For more on the political biographies of these communist officials, see Jan Obrman and Jiří Pehe, "Czechoslovakia – Top Communist Officials: Where Are They Now?" *RFE/RL, Report on Eastern Europe*, 15 February 1991, 3–4.

- ⁶⁶ Bradley, *Czechoslovakia's Velvet Revolution*, 33.
- ⁶⁷ Ibid.
- ⁶⁸ For more on Štrougal's political career see Alan Levy, "Lubomír Štrougal: Chameleon Survival," in *The Prague Post*, 28 August 2002; Internet; <http://www.praguepost.com/archivescontent/18955-lubomir-strougal-chameleon-survival.html>; accessed 13 October 2013.
- ⁶⁹ "If, for the Communist Party, Gorbachev's perestroika, glasnost, and demokratizatsiya proved a handicap, for the opposition such policies were godsent. It acclaimed them publicly pointing out that the unprogressive and obscurantist regime would never apply them." See Bradley, *Czechoslovakia's Velvet Revolution*, 37.
- ⁷⁰ Opletal was shot in Prague on 28 October 1939, during a large demonstration against the Nazi occupation which gathered some 100,000 people. He died on 11 November, and the funeral service held on 15 November turned into an anti-Nazi protest. In response, on 17 November 1939 the Nazi occupants unleashed a wave of repression against the Prague students. See, for instance, Brian Kenety, "The 17th of November: Remembering Jan Opletal, martyr of an occupied nation," *Radio Prague*, 17 November 2005; Internet; <http://www.radio.cz/en/section/panorama/the-17th-of-november-remembering-jan-opletal-martyr-of-an-occupied-nation>; accessed 12 April 2014.
- ⁷¹ Šimral, "Czechoslovakia 1989," 241.
- ⁷² According to Tůma, in the early 1970s "opposition activity ... was almost exclusively limited to the Czech lands." Tůma, "Czechoslovakia," 36.
- ⁷³ As Pithart aptly puts it: "The Czech part of the federal republic suffered from a much greater shock than did the Slovak part during the normalization period. In the Czech Republic, hundreds of thousands of people had become politically active in favor of a democracy which ended up being spectacularly defeated, and the vanquished had to be commensurately punished. In the Slovak Republic, people became politically active towards the national cause, Slovak statehood and the federation which had apparently triumphed." See Pithart, "Towards a Shared Freedom," 210.
- ⁷⁴ Šimral, "Czechoslovakia 1989," 240.
- ⁷⁵ Navrátil et al., eds., *The Prague Spring 1968*, 441.
- ⁷⁶ Tůma, "Czechoslovakia," 36–37.

- ⁷⁷ With regard to the kind of music played at the time by PPU see, for instance, *The Plastic People Of The Universe: Egon Bondy's Happy Hearts Club Banned*, PPU III./1974–75, Globus Music, 2001, CD.
- ⁷⁸ Hlavsa's statement is cited in Richie Unterberger, "The Plastic People of the Universe;" Internet; <http://www.richieunterberger.com/ppu.html>; accessed 25 October 2013.
- ⁷⁹ For more on the Prague underground musical scene see Falk, *The Dilemmas of Dissidence in East-Central Europe*, 84–87. On the trial of the PPU band, see also Sabrina P. Ramet, *Social Currents in Eastern Europe: The Sources and Meaning of the Great Transformation* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1991), 102.
- ⁸⁰ For the complete text of the Charter 77 declaration see, for instance, Council on Foreign Relations, "Charter 77 Declaration," 1; Internet; http://libpro.cts.cuni.cz/charta/docs/declaration_of_charter_77.pdf; accessed 26 October 2013.
- ⁸¹ Ibid., 1.
- ⁸² Ibid., 3–4.
- ⁸³ Ramet, *Social Currents in Eastern Europe*, 102–103.
- ⁸⁴ Quoted in Falk, *The Dilemmas of Dissidence in East-Central Europe*, 91.
- ⁸⁵ For a biography of Havel, see John Keane, *Václav Havel: A Political Tragedy in Six Acts* (New York: Basic Books, 2000).
- ⁸⁶ For more on this see Tůma, "Czechoslovakia," 39.
- ⁸⁷ Ibid., 41.
- ⁸⁸ For a detailed account of the ten rounds of negotiations between the regime and the opposition see Miloš Calda, "The Roundtable Talks in Czechoslovakia," in Elster, ed., *The Roundtable Talks and the Breakdown of Communism*, 135–77.
- ⁸⁹ On the political biography of Čalfa see Jiří Pehe, "Marián Čalfa to Form a New Government" *RFE/RL, Report on Eastern Europe*, 29 June 1990, 6–7.

Chapter Six: Bulgaria

- ¹ Quoted in Michael Palairat, "'Lenin' and 'Brezhnev': Steel Making and the Bulgarian Economy, 1956–90," *Europe-Asia Studies*, Vol. 47, No. 3 (May 1995), 493.
- ² John R. Lampe, *The Bulgarian Economy in the Twentieth Century* (Beckenham, UK: Croom Helm, 1986), 139–45.

- ³ See Appendix III: National Plans, in Albert Waterston, *Development Planning: Lessons of Experience* (Baltimore, MD: The Johns Hopkins Press, 1969), 602–604. See also Section 2: The Ninth Five-Year Plan (1986–1990), in Radio Free Europe Research, *Bulgaria: Situation Report 1* (13 February 1987), 9–13; Internet; <http://www.osaarchivum.org/greenfield/repository/osa:b0c80481-30da-4b52-afc9-8891a52f126e>; accessed 17 August 2014.
- ⁴ See Section IV: The Five-Year Plan in Four Years, in Vulko Chervenkov, “The Fatherland Front and Its Impeding Tasks: Report Delivered at the Third Congress of the Fatherland Front, Sofia, 28 May 1952,” Internet; <http://www.revolutionarydemocracy.org/archive/chervenkov.htm>; accessed 17 August 2014.
- ⁵ Vesselin Dimitrov, *Bulgaria: The Uneven Transition* (London: Routledge 2001), 25.
- ⁶ Ibid., 26.
- ⁷ Ilchev, *A Short History of Bulgaria*, 391–92.
- ⁸ Ibid., 392–93.
- ⁹ Dimitrov, *Bulgaria*, 28–29.
- ¹⁰ Lampe, *The Bulgarian Economy*, 139.
- ¹¹ Jozef Wilczynski, *The Economics of Socialism: Principles Governing the Operation of the Centrally Planned Economies in the USSR and Eastern Europe under the New System* (Chicago, IL: Aldine Publishing, 1973), 70; originally published in 1970.
- ¹² Wilczynski, *The Economics of Socialism*, 124. Over the period 1970–90, the share of the urban population in the total population increased as follows: 1970 – 51.8 percent; 1975 – 57.5 percent; 1980 – 61.2 percent; 1985 – 64.5 percent; and 1990 – 66.4 percent. See United Nations Population Division, Department of Economic and Social Affairs, *Country Profiles: Bulgaria, Time-Series Indicators – Population*; Internet; <http://www.un.org/esa/population/publications/countryprofile/bulgaria.pdf>; accessed 30 January 2010.
- ¹³ The Pernik combine was named after Lenin, while the Kremikovtsi complex was named after Brezhnev. For more on the establishment of the “Lenin” and “Brezhnev” steelworks, see Palairat, “Steel Making and the Bulgarian Economy, 1956–90,” 493–95.
- ¹⁴ Dimitrov, *Bulgaria*, 31.
- ¹⁵ Ibid.
- ¹⁶ Ilchev, *A Short History of Bulgaria*, 396–97.

- ¹⁷ Marwin Jackson, “The Rise and Decay of the Socialist Economy in Bulgaria,” *The Journal of Economic Perspectives*, Vol. 5, No. 4 (Autumn 1991), 205.
- ¹⁸ Kostadin Tchakarov, *The Second Floor: An Exposé of Backstage Politics in Bulgaria* (London: Macdonald, 1991), 155–56.
- ¹⁹ Tchakarov, *An Exposé of Backstage Politics in Bulgaria*, 156.
- ²⁰ Ibid., 156.
- ²¹ Dimitrov, *Bulgaria*, 31.
- ²² Skilling, *Communism National and International*, 58.
- ²³ As Skilling puts it: “Between the wars, Bulgarian communism was fortunate in having as its leader Georgi Dimitrov, a prominent figure in Comintern, and of world-wide renown, who returned to Bulgaria in 1944 to direct the new régime.” Ibid., 58.
- ²⁴ Roumiana Deltcheva, “Totalitarian Journalism and the Media from a Systemic and Dialogic Perspective: The Case of Bulgaria,” in Steven Tötösy de Zepetnek and Irene Sywenky, eds., *The Systemic and Empirical Approach to Literature and Culture as Theory and Application* (Edmonton: Research Institute for Comparative Literature and Cross-Cultural Studies, University of Alberta & Institute for Empirical Literature and Media Research, Siegen University, 1997), 247.
- ²⁵ Ibid.
- ²⁶ Maria N. Todorova, “Improbable Maverick or Typical Conformist? Seven Thoughts on the New Bulgaria,” in Ivo Banac, ed., *Eastern Europe in Revolution* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1992), 159.
- ²⁷ As Lewin argues, the new political line adopted under Gorbachev allowed for an increasing criticism of official ideology: “Ideology and ideological life were also described as being in shambles. The Soviet people, the leaders admitted, did not believe official statements, and ideological dogma, though lifeless, was a powerful impediment to the country’s development.... The system was ideologically vulnerable and unacceptably backward.” Moshe Lewin, *The Gorbachev Phenomenon: A Historical Interpretation*, expanded edition (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1991), 115.
- ²⁸ Dimitrina Petrova, “Bulgaria,” in Pollack and Wielgoths, eds., *Dissent and Opposition in Communist Eastern Europe*, 168.
- ²⁹ As Dimitrov asserts: “The collapse came sooner than anyone had expected, and was driven primarily by external influences, most obviously Gorbachev’s change of Soviet policy towards Eastern

Europe and his attempt to transform the political and economic fundamentals of communism." See Dimitrov, *Bulgaria*, 31.

³⁰ Ibid., 35.

³¹ The Fatherland Front (FF) came into being in 1941 and its political composition underwent a series of changes in 1942 and 1943. FF comprised various political groupings ranging from communists and social democrats to left-wing agrarians. For more on this, see Crampton, *A Concise History of Bulgaria*, 174–75 and 179.

³² Ilchev, *A Short History of Bulgaria*, 383.

³³ Adam Zwass, *The Economies of Eastern Europe in a Time of Change*, translated from German by Michel Vale (New York: M. E. Sharpe, 1984), 66.

³⁴ Crampton, *A Concise History of Bulgaria*, 185–86 and Richard F. Staar, *Communist Regimes in Eastern Europe*, 4th ed. (Stanford, CA: Hoover Institution Press, 1982), 36.

³⁵ Chervenkov was married to Elena Dimitrova, sister of the defunct leader Georgi Dimitrov.

³⁶ Staar, *Communist Regimes in Eastern Europe*, 39. See also Open Society Archives, RFE News & Information Service – Evaluation & Research Section, "The Bulgarian Communist Party on the Eve of its Seventh Congress," Background Report, Bulgarian Evaluation, 31 May 1958, 2; Internet: <http://www.osaarchivum.org/files/holdings/300/8/3/pdf/5-1-1.pdf>; accessed 13 February 2010.

³⁷ With regard to the outcome of the purges, Vesselin Dimitrov perceptively notes: "Irrational as they may seem, the purges did have their twisted logic. They struck at the most idealistic and independent-minded communists, leaving in their wake cynical careerists whose only concern was to please the Soviet Union." Dimitrov, *Bulgaria*, 24.

³⁸ Petrova, "Bulgaria," 162–63.

³⁹ See *Voices from the Gulag: Life and Death in Communist Bulgaria*, compiled and edited by Tzvetan Todorov, translated by Robert Zaretsky (University Park, PA: The Pennsylvania State University Press, 1999), 40–41; originally published in 1992.

⁴⁰ Crampton, *A Concise History of Bulgaria*, 190–91.

⁴¹ Todorov, ed., *Life and Death in Communist Bulgaria*, 40.

⁴² See *RFE Background Report – Bulgarian Evaluation*, 31 May 1958, 2.

⁴³ Dimitrov, *Bulgaria*, 27–28.

⁴⁴ Open Society Archives, Radio Free Europe Research, "The April Conspiracy in Bulgaria," 22 April 1965, 4–6; Internet,

<http://www.osaarchivum.org/files/holdings/300/8/3/pdf/6-5-120.pdf>; accessed 14 February 2010.

⁴⁵ Quoted in Rothschild, *Return to Diversity*, 214.

⁴⁶ Skilling, *Communism National and International*, 27–28. For more on Yugov's political career, see Branko Lazitch with Milorad M. Drachkovitch, *Biographical Dictionary of the Comintern*, new revised and expanded edition (Stanford, CA: The Hoover Institution Press, 1986), 522–23.

⁴⁷ Quoted in Rothschild, *Return to Diversity*, 214.

⁴⁸ Rothschild, *Return to Diversity*, 217.

⁴⁹ Ibid., 215.

⁵⁰ Ilchev, *A Short History of Bulgaria*, 397–98.

⁵¹ For more on the two cinematic narratives, see Branislav L. Slantchev, review of *Khan Asparukh* (Bulgaria, 1981, 338 min., color), directed by Lyudmil Staikov (14 December 2002); Internet, <http://www.gotterdammerung.org/film/reviews/k/khan-asparukh.html>, and idem, review of *681 A.D.: The Glory of Khan* (Bulgaria, 1984, 95 min., color, dubbed in English), directed by Lyudmil Staikov (14 December 2002), Internet, <http://www.gotterdammerung.org/film/reviews/digit/681-ad-the-glory-of-khan.html>; accessed 20 March 2010.

⁵² Todorova, "Seven Thoughts on the New Bulgaria," 154–55.

⁵³ Ibid., 155.

⁵⁴ Petrova, "Bulgaria," 179.

⁵⁵ Todorova, "Seven Thoughts on the New Bulgaria," 158–59.

⁵⁶ Petrova, "Bulgaria," 166.

⁵⁷ Ibid., 166–67.

⁵⁸ See Note 10 in Kyril Drezov, "Bulgaria and Macedonia: Voluntary Dependence on External Actors," in Jan Zielonka and Alex Pravda, eds., *Democratic Consolidation in Eastern Europe: International and Transnational Factors*, vol. 2 (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001), 425.

⁵⁹ As Drezov notes: "In the spring and summer of 1989, only the budding opposition groups in Bulgaria – the largest of which had 215 members – supported the demands of ethnic Turks. These groups were vilified as traitors by the government." Drezov, "Bulgaria and Macedonia," 427.

⁶⁰ Petrova, "Bulgaria," 170.

⁶¹ Crampton, *A Concise History of Bulgaria*, 199.

⁶² With regard to the number of ethnic Turks who emigrated until August 1989, figures vary from 344,000 provided in Petrova,

“Bulgaria,” 170 and 369,000 put forward in Drezov, “Bulgaria and Macedonia,” 426.

⁶³ The Kozloduy Nuclear Power Plant (NPP) is equipped with Pressurized Water Reactors of Soviet design and was developed over the period 1970–91. Units 1 and 2 were built during the period 1970–75 and equipped with standard first generation reactors (WWER–440); units 3 and 4 were built during the period 1973–82 and were equipped with enhanced first generation reactors (WWER–440); finally, units 5 and 6 were built during the period 1982–91 and were equipped with standard second generation reactors (WWER–1000). For details, see World Nuclear Association, “Early Soviet Reactors and EU Accession: Appendix to Safety of Nuclear Power Reactors,” Internet; <http://www.world-nuclear.org/info/Safety-and-Security/Safety-of-Plants/Appendices/Early-Soviet-Reactors-and-EU-Accession/>; accessed 17 August 2014.

⁶⁴ Petrova, “Bulgaria,” 172 and 173.

⁶⁵ Perry, “Bulgaria’s ‘Union of Democratic Forces’ and its Antecedents,” in Höpken, ed., *Revolution auf Raten*, 34.

⁶⁶ On the Bulgarian roundtable talks, see Romyana Kolarova and Dimitr Dimitrov, “The Roundtable Talks in Bulgaria,” in Elster, ed., *The Roundtable Talks and the Breakdown of Communism*, 178–205.

⁶⁷ Crampton, *A Concise History of Bulgaria*, 215.

Chapter Seven: Romania

This chapter is based on a previously published work titled *Explaining the Romanian Revolution of 1989: Culture, Structure, and Contingency* (Bucharest: Editura Enciclopedică, 2010).

¹ The following abbreviations are used in this chapter to denominate the communist party in Romania. During the period 1948–65, the official name of the party was Romanian Workers Party–RWP (*Partidul Muncitoresc Român–PMR*), while during the period 1965–89 its official name was Romanian Communist Party–RCP (*Partidul Comunist Român–PCR*). The abbreviation RCP is also used for the period spanning from its establishment in 1921 until 1944, although for this period, the name used in Romanian scholarly literature to denominate the party is Communist Party of Romania–CPoR

(*Partidul Comunist din România–PCdR*). See Vasile Buga, “Partidul Comunist Român,” in Octavian Roske, ed., *România, 1945–1989. Enciclopedia regimului comunist: Instituții de partid, de stat, obștești și cooperatiste* (Bucharest: Institutul Național pentru Studiul Totalitarismului, 2012), 402–69.

² Other similar joint ventures were: Sovromtransport (transport sector, established in 1945); Tars (air transport, 1945); Sovrombanc (banking, 1945); Sovromlemn (timber, 1946); Sovromchim (chemical industry, 1948); Sovromtractor (tractors, 1948); Sovromgaz (natural gas, 1949); Sovromconstrucții (construction sector, 1949); Sovromasigurări (insurance sector, 1949); Sovromutilaj (oilfield equipment, 1952); Sovromnaval (ship building, 1952); and Sovromcuart (uranium exploitation, 1952). See Per Ronnäs, *Urbanization in Romania: A Geography of Social and Economic Change since Independence* (Stockholm: The Economic Research Institute, 1984), 283 and David Turnock, *The Romanian Economy in the Twentieth Century* (London: Croom Helm, 1986), 157.

³ Health institutions and movie production companies were nationalized on 3 November 1948; pharmacies, drugstores, chemical and pharmaceutical companies, and medical labs were nationalized on 2 April 1949. On 20 April 1950 a considerable part of the urban housing sector was also nationalized. Dinu C. Giurescu, *Illustrated History of the Romanian People* (Bucharest: Editura Sport-Turism, 1981), 595 and Ghita Ionescu, *Communism in Romania, 1944–1962* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1976), 161–67; originally published in 1964.

⁴ A convenient rate of 1 new leu for 20 old lei was applied for small amounts only. For large amounts of cash, a much lower exchange rate was offered, which could reach the extreme of 1 new leu for 400 old lei. See Ionescu, *Communism in Romania*, 203–204 and Turnock, *The Romanian Economy*, 160.

⁵ Ionescu, *Communism in Romania*, 193.

⁶ The lion’s share of the new investments went to traditional industrial centres such as Bucharest and Brașov (engineering), and Hunedoara and Reșița (metallurgy). Turnock, *The Romanian Economy*, 162.

⁷ Ioan Ganea, Marcel Croitoru and Filomenos Savin, eds., *Electrificarea în România, 1951–1992* (Bucharest: Editura Tehnică, 1996), 158–62.

⁸ Giurescu, *Illustrated History*, 602.

- ⁹ Dan Cătănuș and Octavian Roske, eds., *Colectivizarea agriculturii în România: Dimensiunea politică, 1949–1953* (Bucharest: Institutul Național pentru Studiul Totalitarismului, 2000), 33–48.
- ¹⁰ Andreas C. Tsantis and Roy Pepper, eds., *Romania: The Industrialization of an Agrarian Economy Under Socialist Planning* (Washington, D. C.: The World Bank, 1979), 229.
- ¹¹ Gheorghe Gheorghiu-Dej, “Raportul de activitate al Comitetului Central al Partidului Muncitoresc Român la Congresul al II-lea al Partidului—23 decembrie 1955,” in idem, *Articole și cuvântări: decembrie 1955–iulie 1959* (Bucharest: Editura Politică, 1960), 38.
- ¹² Of the total investment in industry, 20.5 percent was to be allotted to petroleum; 13 percent to chemicals, paper and cellulose; 12 percent to ferrous metallurgy; 11 percent to electric power production; 8 percent to coal; 6.5 percent to nonferrous metallurgy; 5 percent to natural gas; 5 percent to textiles, clothing and footwear; 4.5 percent to food processing; 4.5 percent to construction materials; 4.5 percent to machinery and electric equipment; 4 percent to lumber and wood processing; and 1.5 percent to other branches. Gheorghiu-Dej, “Raportul de activitate al CC al PMR la Congresul al II-lea al Partidului,” 73–74.
- ¹³ See the complete set of data in Gheorghiu-Dej, “Raportul de activitate al CC al PMR la Congresul al II-lea al Partidului,” 76.
- ¹⁴ Gheorghe Gheorghiu-Dej, “Raport prezentat la Plenara CC al PMR din 27–29 decembrie 1956,” in idem, *Articole și cuvântări: decembrie 1955–iulie 1959*, 209.
- ¹⁵ Gheorghe Gheorghiu-Dej, “Expunere făcută la consfătuirea pe țară a țăranilor și lucrătorilor din sectorul socialist al agriculturii, Constanța, 3 aprilie 1958,” in idem, *Articole și cuvântări: decembrie 1955–iulie 1959*, 369–70.
- ¹⁶ Gheorghe Gheorghiu-Dej, “Raport prezentat la Plenara lărgită a CC al PMR din 13–14 iulie 1959,” in idem, *Articole și cuvântări: decembrie 1955–iulie 1959*, 643–76.
- ¹⁷ Maria Mureșan, *Evoluții economice, 1945–1990* (Bucharest: Editura Economică, 1995), 87.
- ¹⁸ Ganea, Croitoru and Savin, eds., *Electrificarea în România*, 162.
- ¹⁹ Gheorghe Gheorghiu-Dej, *40 de ani de luptă a Partidului sub steagul atotbiruitor al Marxism-Leninismului* (Bucharest: Editura Politică, 1961), 24.
- ²⁰ Turnock, *The Romanian Economy*, 199–200.
- ²¹ Silviu Brucan, *Generația irosită: Memorii* (Bucharest: Editurile Universul & Calistrat Hogaș, 1992), 86–87. See also Paul Niculescu-Mizil, *O istorie trăită* (Bucharest: Editura Enciclopedică, 1997), 164–76.
- ²² The complex was inaugurated on 16 May 1972 in the presence of Ceaușescu and Tito. See Dinu C. Giurescu, ed., *Istoria României în date* (Bucharest: Editura Enciclopedică, 2003), 578 and 627–28.
- ²³ Vlad Georgescu, *The Romanians: A History* (London: I. B. Tauris, 1991), 245.
- ²⁴ An official rejection of the so-called Valev Plan appeared in the form of an article published by the economic periodical *Viața economică* (Bucharest) No. 24 (43), 12 June 1964; Internet, http://www.cnsas.ro/documente/istoria_comunism/documente_programatice/1964%20Relatiile%20economice%20dintre%20tarile%20socialiste.pdf; accessed 15 August 2014.
- ²⁵ Nicolae Ceaușescu, “Raportul Comitetului Central al Partidului Comunist Român cu privire la activitatea partidului în perioada dintre Congresul al VIII-lea și Congresul al IX-lea al PCR,” in idem, *România pe drumul desăvârșirii construcției socialiste: Rapoarte, cuvântări, articole, iulie 1965–septembrie 1966* (Bucharest: Editura Politică, 1968), 20.
- ²⁶ Reproduced after Table 2.2. in Mureșan, *Evoluții economice*, 87. See also Table 5.1. Use of National Income (in Comparable Prices) for Consumption and Accumulation, 1951–55 to 1971–75, in Tsantis and Pepper, *Romania*, 82.
- ²⁷ John Michael Montias, *Economic Development in Communist Rumania* (Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press, 1967), 1.
- ²⁸ Tsantis and Pepper, *Romania*, 331.
- ²⁹ Nicolae Ceaușescu, *Raport la cel de-al XI-lea Congres al Partidului Comunist Român* (Bucharest: Editura Politică, 1974), 47–53.
- ³⁰ The resuming of work on the Danube–Black Sea Canal was first discussed at the Plenum of the CC of the RCP held on 18–19 June 1973. Constantin Voican, “Istoria se scrie sub ochii noștri: Cronologie selectivă extrasă din colecția Scânteii,” in *Almanah Scânteia* 1974, 128–29. The general plan for the execution of the canal was approved at the Meeting of the CC of the RCP on 9 May 1978. Idem, “Istoria se scrie sub ochii noștri,” in *Almanah Scânteia* 1979, 118.

- ³¹ See Table SA8.7, *Housing Turned over to Occupancy, 1965–1976*, in Tsantis and Pepper, *Romania*, 666–71.
- ³² See Table 12.9, *Average Number of Persons for Each Dwelling, 1965, 1970 and 1975*, in Tsantis and Pepper, *Romania*, 295. The increase in the number of persons per dwelling during the period 1965–70 can be explained by the sudden rise in the birth rate after 1966 due to regime's policy of forced natality.
- ³³ In 1965, out of a total of 191,988 dwellings put into occupancy, one-room dwellings amounted to 57,116 (29.8 percent); two-room dwellings amounted to 85,080 (44.3 percent), while dwellings with three rooms or more amounted to 49,792 (25.9 percent). In 1970, there were 159,152 dwellings put into occupancy, of which 26,548 (16.7 percent) with one room; 83,935 (52.7 percent) with two rooms; and 48,669 (30.6 percent) with three rooms and over. In 1975, out of a total of 165,431 dwellings put into occupancy, 14,952 (9.0 percent) had one room; 83,148 (50.3 percent) had two rooms; and 67,331 (40.7 percent) had three rooms or more. See Table 12.12, *Housing Put into Occupancy, by Number of Rooms and Sources of Funds, 1965–1975*, in Tsantis and Pepper, *Romania*, 298–99.
- ³⁴ On the terms and conditions of loans for the purchase of apartments built by the state, see Tsantis and Pepper, *Romania*, 291–92.
- ³⁵ For more on the Pitești enterprise see C. Ștefănescu, C. Moroșan and I. Soare, *Monografia Uzinei de Autoturisme Pitești* (Pitești: n.p., 1972).
- ³⁶ In 1973, the price of premium gasoline was raised from 2.50 lei/l to 4.50 lei/l while the price of regular gasoline was raised from 1.75 lei/l to 4.30 lei/l. Tsantis and Pepper, *Romania*, 345.
- ³⁷ *Almanah Scânteia* 1967, 257–68, 305–52 and 380–92, and *Almanah Scânteia* 1977.
- ³⁸ Capitalism went through the following five industrial ages: (1) the cotton-textile age (from the 1780s to the 1830s); (2) the rail and iron age (from the 1840s to the early 1870s); (3) the steel and organic-chemistry age (from the 1870s up to World War I); (4) the age of automobiles and petrochemicals (from the 1910s to the 1970s); and (5) the age of electronics, information, and biotechnology (from the 1970s to the present). Chirot, “What Happened in Eastern Europe in 1989?” 6–8.
- ³⁹ Marin Nedelea, *Istoria României în date, 1940–1995* (Bucharest: Editura Niculescu, 1997), 294.

- ⁴⁰ Aldcroft and Morewood, *Economic Change in Eastern Europe since 1918*, 169.
- ⁴¹ Brus, *Histoire économique de l'Europe de l'Est*, 322–23.
- ⁴² The erection of the plant started on 17 June 1977 and the production of the Olcit automobiles was inaugurated in November 1982. Voican, “Istoria se scrie sub ochii noștri,” in *Almanah Scânteia* 1978, 115.
- ⁴³ The first ROMBAC 1-11 jet-propelled aircraft took off from Bucharest on 28 January 1983 on a domestic flight to Timișoara; on 23 March the same year, the aircraft performed its first international flight from Bucharest Otopeni to London Heathrow. Giurescu, ed., *Istoria României în date*, 701–702.
- ⁴⁴ For more on the first Danube–Black Sea Canal see Doina Jela, *Cazul Nichita Dumitru: Încercare de reconstituire a unui proces comunist, 29 august–1 septembrie 1952* (Bucharest: Editura Humanitas, 1995), 25–55.
- ⁴⁵ Gheorghe Leahu, *Bucureștiul dispărut* (Bucharest: Editura Arta Grafică, 1995), 116 and 187.
- ⁴⁶ For more on this, see Dinu C. Giurescu, *The Razing of Romania's Past* (Washington, D.C.: The Preservation Press, 1989).
- ⁴⁷ Tsantis and Pepper, *Romania*, 390–91.
- ⁴⁸ Georgescu, *The Romanians*, 270. See also “De ce a intrat România în încetare parțială de plăți în 1981 și cum a plătit Ceaușescu toată datoria externă” (30 May 2011); <http://businessday.ro/05/2011/de-ce-a-intrat-romania-in-incetare-partiala-de-plati-in-1981-si-cum-a-platit-ceausescu-toata-datoria-externa/>; Internet; accessed 21 August 2014.
- ⁴⁹ Nedelea, *Istoria României în date*, 318.
- ⁵⁰ Account by Grigore Olimp Ioan published in *Martor* (Witness): *The Review of Anthropology of the Museum of the Romanian Peasant* (Bucharest) No.7 (2002), 132.
- ⁵¹ Account by Puiu Gheorghiu, *Martor*, 77.
- ⁵² Shafir, *Romania*, 118.
- ⁵³ Pavel Câmpeanu, *Ceaușescu, anii numărătorii inverse* (Iași: Editura Polirom, 2002), 279–87.
- ⁵⁴ Confession of Marian Ricu in Marius Oprea and Stejărel Olaru, eds., *Ziua care nu se uită: 15 noiembrie 1987, Brașov* (Iași: Editura Polirom, 2002), 49.
- ⁵⁵ Confession of Aurel Buceanu. *Ibid.*, 52.

- ⁵⁶ “Romania: A Case of ‘Dynastic’ Communism,” in *Perspectives on Freedom* No. 11 (New York: Freedom House, 1989), 34.
- ⁵⁷ Trond Gilberg, *Nationalism and Communism in Romania: The Rise and Fall of Ceaușescu’s Personal Dictatorship* (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1990), 34.
- ⁵⁸ Quoted in *Istoria patriei și a Partidului Comunist Român în opera Președintelui Nicolae Ceaușescu* (Bucharest: Editura Militară, 1979), 369.
- ⁵⁹ Robert C. Tucker, “Stalinism and Comparative Communism,” in idem, ed., *Stalinism*, xviii–xix.
- ⁶⁰ Dinu C. Giurescu, “Documente privind ‘alegerile’ din 1946,” in *Centenar Constantin C. Giurescu* (Craiova: Editura Universitaria, 2001), 313–24.
- ⁶¹ Câmpeanu, *Ceaușescu, anii numărătorii inverse*, 180–95.
- ⁶² Jowitt, *Revolutionary Breakthroughs and National Development*, 74.
- ⁶³ *Declarație cu privire la poziția Partidului Muncitoresc Român în problemele mișcării comuniste și muncitorești internaționale, adoptată de Plenara lărgită a CC al PMR din aprilie 1964* (Bucharest: Editura Politică, 1964), 55.
- ⁶⁴ Account by Anca Manolescu, *Martor*, 124.
- ⁶⁵ Ibid.
- ⁶⁶ Account by Speranța Rădulescu, *Martor*, 125.
- ⁶⁷ Mihai Botez, “Declinul marxismului și criza comunismului,” review of *The Crisis of Marxist Ideology in Eastern Europe: The Poverty of Utopia*, by Vladimir Tismăneanu, *Agora*, Vol. 2, No. 2 (July 1989), 84.
- ⁶⁸ Garton Ash, *Germany and the Divided Continent*, 4.
- ⁶⁹ Iakovlev, *Ce vrem să facem din Uniunea Sovietică*, 114.
- ⁷⁰ Nicolae Ceaușescu, “Expunere la ședința jubiliară a Marii Adunări Naționale consacrată sărbătoririi semicentenarului unirii Transilvaniei cu România—29 noiembrie 1968,” in idem, *România pe drumul făuririi societății socialiste multilateral dezvoltate: Rapoarte, cuvântări, articole, ianuarie 1968—martie 1969* (Bucharest: Editura Politică, 1969), 745–46.
- ⁷¹ Iakovlev, *Ce vrem să facem din Uniunea Sovietică*, 114.
- ⁷² Constantin Olteanu, *România, o voce distinctă în Tratatul de la Varșovia: Memorii, 1980–1985* (Bucharest: Editura Aldo, 1999), 212–19.

- ⁷³ See “Stenograma întâlnirii lui Nicolae Ceaușescu cu Mihail Gorbaciiov la 4 decembrie 1989, la Moscova,” in Olteanu, *Memorii, 1980–1985*, 234–43.
- ⁷⁴ Ibid., 236.
- ⁷⁵ *Informarea Ambasadei României la Varșovia către Ministerul Afacerilor Externe, 19 aprilie 1989, ora 19:00*, in Dumitru Preda and Mihai Retegan, eds., 1989. *Principiul dominoului: Prăbușirea regimurilor comuniste europene* (Bucharest: Editura Fundației Culturale Române, 2000), 51–52.
- ⁷⁶ *Raportul Ambasadei României la Budapesta către Ministerul Afacerilor Externe, 24 mai 1989, ora 17:00*, in Preda and Retegan, eds., 1989, 75–76.
- ⁷⁷ *Informarea Ambasadei României la Varșovia către Ministerul Afacerilor Externe, 7 iunie 1989, ora 15:00*; and *Raportul Ambasadei României la Varșovia către Ministerul Afacerilor Externe, 24 iunie 1989, ora 8:00*, ibid., 98–99 and 114–18 respectively.
- ⁷⁸ *Raportul Ambasadei României la Budapesta către Ministerul Afacerilor Externe, 17 iunie 1989, ora 23:00*, ibid., 108–112.
- ⁷⁹ *Nota Ambasadei României la Budapesta către Ministerul Afacerilor Externe, 12 august 1989, ora 17:00*, ibid., 146–47.
- ⁸⁰ *Raportul ambasadei române la Varșovia către Ministerul Afacerilor Externe, 22 august 1989, ora 01:45*, ibid., 164–65.
- ⁸¹ Quoted in *Răspuns la punctul de vedere al Comitetului Politic Executiv al PCR și al Președintelui Nicolae Ceaușescu în legătură cu aprecierea actualiei situații din Polonia, inclusiv cu formarea guvernului Republicii Populare Polone*, ibid., 165–67.
- ⁸² *Răspuns la punctul de vedere al Comitetului Politic Executiv al PCR și al Președintelui Nicolae Ceaușescu*, 166.
- ⁸³ *Informarea Ambasadei României la Budapesta către Ministerul Afacerilor Externe, 24 august 1989, ora 14:15*, ibid., 170–71.
- ⁸⁴ *Nota Ambasadei României la Budapesta către Ministerul Afacerilor Externe, 11 septembrie 1989, ora 14:15*, in Preda and Retegan, eds., 1989, 192–93.
- ⁸⁵ *Raportul Ambasadei României la Varșovia către Ministerul Afacerilor Externe, 17 septembrie 1989, ora 17:00*, ibid., 196–99.
- ⁸⁶ *Nota Ambasadei României la Budapesta către Ministerul Afacerilor Externe, 7 octombrie 1989, ora 23:30*, ibid., 217–18.
- ⁸⁷ See documents: 145; 146; 148; 149; and 150. Ibid., 282–89.
- ⁸⁸ *Nota Ambasadei României la Sofia către Ministerul Afacerilor Externe, 10 noiembrie 1989, ora 18:40*, ibid., 291.

- ⁸⁹ See documents: 164; 165; 172; 176; 181; 184; 186; and 188. Ibid., 306–46.
- ⁹⁰ Quoted in General Ion Pitulescu, ed., *Şase zile care au zguduit România: Ministerul de interne în decembrie 1989* (Bucharest: n.p., 1995), 82.
- ⁹¹ See the account by Dan Ştefan Opreş in Miodrag Milin, *Timişoara în revoluţie şi după* (Timişoara: Editura Marineasa, 1997), 102. See also Stelian Tănase, *Miracolul revoluţiei: O istorie politică a căderii regimurilor comuniste* (Bucharest: Editura Humanitas, 1999), 268.
- ⁹² Gail Kligman, *The Politics of Duplicity: Controlling Reproduction in Ceauşescu's Romania* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1998), 52–59, and Câmpeanu, *Ceauşescu, anii numărătorii inverse*, 275–77.
- ⁹³ According to Easton, political socialization refers to “those developmental processes through which persons acquire political orientations and patterns of behavior.” David Easton, “The Theoretical Relevance of Political Socialization,” in Cantori, ed., *Comparative Political Systems*, 198.
- ⁹⁴ Pitulescu, ed., *Ministerul de interne în decembrie 1989*, 100–101. For a list of the victims of the revolution in Timişoara, see Marius Mioc, *Revoluţia din Timişoara şi falsificatorii istoriei* (Timişoara: Editura Sedona, 1999), 226–41.
- ⁹⁵ Petrescu, *Explaining the Romanian Revolution of 1989*, 21.
- ⁹⁶ For more on the interwar policies of the RCP, see Mircea Muşat and Ion Ardeleanu, *România după Marea Unire 1918–1933*, vol. 2 (Bucharest: Editura Ştiinţifică şi Enciclopedică, 1986), 170–206 and 594–641.
- ⁹⁷ Buga, “Partidul Comunist Român,” 409–10 and 421–22.
- ⁹⁸ For an analysis of RWP membership over the period 1945–89, see Florica Dobre et al., eds., *Membrii CC al PCR, 1945–89* (Bucharest: Editura Enciclopedică, 2004), 20–22. On the “verification campaign” of 1948–50, see Gheorghe Gheorghiu-Dej, “Raportul de activitate al CC al PMR la Congresul al II-lea al Partidului,” in idem, *Articole şi cuvântări: decembrie 1955–iulie 1959*, 117.
- ⁹⁹ A research conducted by the Civic Academy reckons the number of prisons, detention centers, labor camps, mass graves and execution places as 450. This means that in 450 places throughout the country violence was applied against the citizens exclusively on political grounds.

- ¹⁰⁰ Gheorghiu-Dej, *30 de ani de luptă a partidului sub steagul lui Lenin şi Stalin* (Bucharest: Editura Partidului Muncitoresc Român, 1952), 59.
- ¹⁰¹ Florin Constantiniu, *PCR, Pătrăşcanu şi Transilvania, 1945–1946* (Bucharest: Editura Enciclopedică, 2001), 34.
- ¹⁰² Câmpeanu, *Ceauşescu, anii numărătorii inverse*, 62.
- ¹⁰³ This approach is inspired by Ross’ reflections on cultural analysis of politics. See Ross, “Culture and Identity in Comparative Political Analysis,” in Lichbach and Zuckerman, eds., *Comparative Politics*, 44.
- ¹⁰⁴ For more on Gheorghiu-Dej’s political biography, see Dobre et al., eds., *Membrii CC al PCR*, 291–92.
- ¹⁰⁵ Jowitt, *Revolutionary Breakthroughs and National Development*, 74.
- ¹⁰⁶ Recent estimates place the number of political prisoners at around 600,000. If one adds the persons deported, placed under house arrest, interned in labor camps in the Soviet Union etc., the total number of the direct victims of the communist repression rises to approximately 2,000,000 persons. Romulus Rusan, *Cronologia şi geografia represiunii comuniste din România: Recensământul populaţiei concentraţionare, 1945–1989* (Bucharest: Editura Fundaţiei Academia Civică, 2007), 61–62.
- ¹⁰⁷ Ibid., 31–34.
- ¹⁰⁸ Rusan, *Cronologia şi geografia represiunii comuniste din România*, 35.
- ¹⁰⁹ *Statutul Partidului Comunist Român*, Partea a II-a: Membrii de Partid; Secţiunea A: Îndatoriri şi drepturi, punctul 2/b (Bucharest: Editura Politică, 1965), 14–15.
- ¹¹⁰ Jowitt, *The Leninist Extinction*, 233.
- ¹¹¹ *Plenara Comitetului Central al Partidului Comunist Român din 22–25 aprilie 1968* (Bucharest: Editura Politică, 1968).
- ¹¹² The six provisions read as follows: (1) “post-mortem political rehabilitation” of Lucreţiu Pătrăşcanu; (2) “post-mortem political rehabilitation” of Ştefan Foriş; (3) “post-mortem political rehabilitation” of nineteen former party activists: Ecaterina Arbore, Imre Aladar, I. Dic-Dicescu, Tudor Diamandescu, Alexandru Dobrogeanu-Gherea, Elena Filipovici, David Fabian Finkelstein, Dumitru Grofu, Jacques Konitz, Elek Köblös, Leon Lichtblau, Marcel Leonin, Gelber Moscovici (Ghiţă Moscu), Alexandru Nicolau, Marcel Pauker, Eugen Rozvan, Alter Zalic, Petre Zissu and Timotei Marin; (4) revoking of the sanctions issued against eight party activists: Miron Constantinescu, Ion Craiu, Ioan Demeter,

- Constantin Doncea, Mihai Levente, Vasile Modoran, Dumitru Petrescu and Aurel Vijoli; (5) opening of inquiry into similar cases involving party old-timers; and (6) dismissal of Alexandru Drăghici [former head of the Securitate] from the CC of the RCP and opening of inquiry concerning those responsible for “illegal repressive actions” against party activists. See *Hotărârea CC al PCR cu privire la reabilitarea unor activiști de partid*, in *Plenara CC al PCR din 22–25 aprilie 1968*, 64–76.
- 113 Yaacov Y. I. Vertzberger, *Risk Taking and Decision Making: Foreign Military Intervention Decisions* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1998), 244–45.
- 114 Ceaușescu’s speech of 21 August 1968 was published by the party daily *Scântea* No. 7802 (Thursday, 22 august 1968), 1.
- 115 According to Max Weber, charisma is: “A certain quality of an individual personality by virtue of which he is set apart from ordinary men and treated as endowed with supernatural, superhuman, or at least specifically exceptional powers or qualities.” Quoted in Reinhard Bendix, “Reflections on Charismatic Leadership,” in Reinhard Bendix et. al., eds., *State and Society: A Reader in Comparative Sociology* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1973), 619.
- 116 David Beetham, *The Legitimation of Power* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 1991), 156.
- 117 As defined by Beetham. *Ibid.*, 117.
- 118 John Breuilly, *Nationalism and the State*, 2nd ed. (Chicago, IL: The University of Chicago Press, 1994), 1.
- 119 For more on these Romanian cinematic narratives, see Grid Modorcea, ed., *Dictionarul filmului românesc de ficțiune* (Bucharest: Editura Cartea Românească, 2004), 181–82 and 198–99.
- 120 George Schöpflin, *Nations, Identity, Power: The New Politics of Europe* (London: Hurst, 2000), 89.
- 121 Nicolae Ceaușescu, *Propuneri de măsuri pentru îmbunătățirea activității politico-ideologice, de educare marxist-leninistă a membrilor de partid, a tuturor oamenilor muncii—6 iulie 1971 and Expunere la Consfătuirea de lucru a activului de partid din domeniul ideologiei și al activității politice și cultural-educative—9 iulie 1971* (Bucharest: Editura Politică, 1971).
- 122 *Programul Partidului Comunist Român de făurire a societății socialiste multilateral dezvoltate și înaintare a României spre comunism* (Bucharest: Editura Politică, 1975), 27–64.
- 123 Giurescu, ed., *Istoria României în date*, 675.

- 124 Quoted in Mihai Botez, *Românii despre ei înșiși* (Bucharest: Editura Litera, 1992), 33.
- 125 See, for instance: *Conferința a XIX-a a PCUS: O nouă viziune, hotărâri cu caracter novator* (Moscow: Novosti Press Agency, 1988); Nikolai Șmeliov, *Restructurarea așa cum o vede un economist* (Moscow: Novosti Press Agency, 1989); and *Restructurarea: Probleme, Studii, Prognoze – Potențialul spiritual al înnoirii* (Moscow: Novosti Press Agency, 1989).
- 126 For the text of the “letter of the six,” see Brucan, *Generația irosită*, 190–94.
- 127 For the transcript of Ceaușescu’s televised discourse in the evening of 20 December 1989, see Aurel Perva and Carol Roman. *Misterele revoluției române: Revenire după ani* (Bucharest: Editura Carro, 1991), 38–39.
- 128 Numerous works (memoirs, collections of documents etc.) on the armed resistance in the mountains were published after 1989. See, for instance, *Luptătorii din munți. Toma Arnăutoiu. Grupul de la Nucșoara: Documente ale anchetei, procesului, detenției* (Bucharest: Editura Vremea, 1997); Ion Gavrilă-Ogoranu, *Brazii se frâng, dar nu se îndoiesc: Rezistența anticomunistă în Munții Făgărașului* (Timișoara: Editura Marineasa, 1993, 1995); Stefan Bellu, *Pădurea răzvrătită* (Baia Mare: Editura Gutinul, 1993), and Filon Verca, *Parașutați în România vândută: Mișcarea de rezistență, 1944–1948* (Timișoara: Editura Gordian, 1993).
- 129 *Începuturile mișcării de rezistență în România*, vol. 1 (Bucharest: Institutul Național pentru Studiul Totalitarismului, 1998).
- 130 *Ibid.*, 159–62 and 202–212.
- 131 In 1945–46, the American and British administrations were still evaluating the chances of establishing a partisan movement in Romania and showed interest in these armed groups in the mountains. See *Începuturile mișcării de rezistență în România*, 194–96. On the last fighter in the mountains killed by the Securitate see Dennis Deletant, *România sub regimul comunist*, 4th rev. ed. (Bucharest: Fundația Academia Civică, 2012), 103.
- 132 Shafir, *Romania*, 168.
- 133 Cristina Petrescu, “Ar mai fi ceva de spus: Despre disidența din România lui Ceaușescu,” afterword to Dan Petrescu and Liviu Cangeopol, *Ce-ar mai fi de spus: Convorbiri libere într-o țară ocupată*, new and rev. ed. (Bucharest: Editura Nemira, 2000), 319.

- ¹³⁴ On the unfolding of events during the period January–April 1977, see Paul Goma, *Culoarea curcubeului '77: Cutremurul oamenilor* (Oradea: Editura Multiprint, 1993).
- ¹³⁵ For more details on the SLOMR, see Oana Ionel and Dragoș Marcu, "Vasile Paraschiv și 'Securitatea lui,'" in Vasile Paraschiv, *Lupta mea pentru sindicate libere în România: Terorismul politic organizat de statul comunist*, ed. by Oana Ionel and Dragoș Marcu (Iași: Editura Polirom, 2005), 367–71.
- ¹³⁶ Doina Cornea, *Scrisori deschise și alte texte* (Bucharest: Editura Humanitas, 1991), 13–17. See also Doina Cornea, *Libertate? Convorbiri cu Michel Combes* (Bucharest: Editura Humanitas, 1992), and idem, *Jurnal: Ultimele caiete* (Bucharest: Editura Fundației Academia Civică, 2009).
- ¹³⁷ Dorin Tudoran, *Eu, fiul lor: Dosar de Securitate* (Iași: Editura Polirom, 2010).
- ¹³⁸ Herma Köpernik-Kennel, *Jogging cu Securitatea: Rezistența tînărului Radu Filipescu* (Bucharest: Editura Universal Dalsi, 1998), 11–84.
- ¹³⁹ Petrescu and Cangeopol, *Ce-ar mai fi de spus*; the first edition of the book was published in 1990 by the Minerva Publishing House in Bucharest.
- ¹⁴⁰ Gilles Schiller [Jean Stern], "Entretien avec Mircea Dinescu," in *Les Temps Modernes*, No. 513 (Avril 1989): 17–28.
- ¹⁴¹ See "Romanian Poet Mircea Dinescu Criticizes Ceaușescu's Policies and Appeals for Reforms," Romanian Fond, Unit No. 300/60/3/7, File Dissidents: Dinescu Mircea, OSA/RFE Archives, 2–3.
- ¹⁴² Cristina Petrescu, "Despre disidența din România lui Ceaușescu," 337–38.
- ¹⁴³ Stelian Tănase, *Ora oficială de iarnă* (Iași: Institutul European, 1995), 138 and 181.
- ¹⁴⁴ Ibid., 191–92.
- ¹⁴⁵ See *Legea 3 din 30 iunie 1977 privind pensiile de asigurări sociale de stat și asistență socială*, in Ioan Velica and Dragoș Ștefan Velica, *Lupeni '77: Laboratorul puterii* (Deva: Editura Polidava, 2002), 39–71.
- ¹⁴⁶ For a personal account of the strike by Constantin Dobre, see Mihai Barbu and Marian Boboc, *Lupeni '77: Sfânta Varvara versus Tanti Varvara* (Cluj-Napoca: Editura Fundației pentru Studii Europene, 2005), 180–270.
- ¹⁴⁷ For the list of demands, see Barbu and Boboc, *Lupeni '77*, 215–16.

- ¹⁴⁸ Florin Constantiniu, *O istorie sinceră a poporului român* (Bucharest: Editura Univers Enciclopedic, 1997), 519.
- ¹⁴⁹ Gheorghe Gorun, *Rezistența la comunism: Motru '81* (Cluj-Napoca: Editura Clusium, 2005), 51–101.
- ¹⁵⁰ Gorun, *Motru '81*, 58.
- ¹⁵¹ Ibid., 89–90.
- ¹⁵² Dennis Deletant, *Ceaușescu and the Securitate: Coercion and Dissent in Romania, 1965–1989* (London: Hurst, 1995), 250.
- ¹⁵³ On the sentences pronounced see Romulus Rusan, ed., *O zi de toamnă, cândva... 15 noiembrie 1987, Brașov* (Bucharest: Fundația Academia Civică, 2004), 101–121.
- ¹⁵⁴ The analysis has taken into account railway and bus schedules from the period, information provided by different scholars as well as this author's experience of commuting. For instance, in her study on the village of Bințiți (Hunedoara county), Verdery observes that the average commuting time for the commuting villagers was of two hours. Katherine Verdery, *Transylvanian Villagers: Three Centuries of Political, Economic and Ethnic Change* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1983), 58.
- ¹⁵⁵ Direcția Centrală de Statistică, *Republica Socialistă România: Recensământul populației și al locuințelor din 5 ianuarie 1977*, vol. 1, *Populație: Structura demografică* (Bucharest: n.p., 1980), 696–743. For more details see Annex 3 in Dragoș Petrescu, "Workers and Peasant-Workers in a Working-Class 'Paradise': Patterns of Working-Class Protest in Communist Romania," in Peter Hübner, Christoph Kleßmann and Klaus Tenfelde, eds., *Arbeiter im Staatssozialismus: Ideologischer Anspruch und Soziale Wirklichkeit* (Cologne: Böhlau Verlag, 2005), 140.
- ¹⁵⁶ In both cases, workers were well represented in absolute numbers as well as in the percentage of the total population. In the case of Timiș county, workers represented 59.1 percent of the total county's population, while in the case of Constanța county, workers made up 64.0 percent of the total population. Ronnäs, *Urbanization in Romania*, 369–73.
- ¹⁵⁷ Pitulescu, ed., *Ministerul de interne în decembrie 1989*, 100.
- ¹⁵⁸ Marius Mioc, ed., *Revoluția, fără mistere: Cazul László Tökés. Documente din arhiva Judecătorei Timișora; Documente din arhiva parohiei reformate Timișoara; Mărturii* (Timișoara: Editura "Almanahul Banatului," 2002), 144–45.

- 159 Reproduced in Perva and Roman, *Misterele revoluției române*, 38–
39.
- 160 Costache Codrescu, ed., *Armata Română în revoluția din decembrie 1989*, 2nd rev. ed. (Bucharest: Editura Militară, 1998), 82.
- 161 On the events in Sibiu see Constantin Vasile, *Noi am fost teroriștii?!* (Sibiu: Editura Sibguard, 1995), 16–56.
- 162 Marius Petrașcu et al., *Un pas spre libertate: Brașov, decembrie 1989* (Brașov: Fundația “Sfântul Ioan,” n.d.), 80–85.
- 163 Mioc, ed., *Revoluția, fără mistere*, 220.
- 164 Quoted in Tănase, *Miracolul revoluției*, 267.
- 165 Codrescu, ed., *Armata Română în revoluția din decembrie 1989*, 111.
- 166 Pitulescu, ed., *Ministerul de interne în decembrie 1989*, 169.
- 167 Stelian Tănase, “Solstițiu însângerat la București,” in idem, *Șocuri și crize* (Bucharest: Editura Staff, 1993), 14–15.
- 168 Pitulescu, ed., *Ministerul de interne în decembrie 1989*, 175.
- 169 Perva and Roman, *Misterele revoluției române*, 46–49.
- 170 The Ceaușescu couple were arrested on 22 December. On 25 December, after a staged trial, Nicolae and Elena Ceaușescu were executed by a firing squad in the city of Târgoviște, 74 km north of Bucharest. See Grigore Cartianu, *Sfârșitul Ceaușesților: Să mori împușcat ca un animal sălbatic* (Bucharest: Editura Adevărul Holding, 2010).
- 171 Tiberiu Urdăreanu, *1989: Martor și participant* (Bucharest: Editura Militară, 1996), 115.

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